

A HISTORY OF LIMESTONE COUNTY

Ray A. Walter

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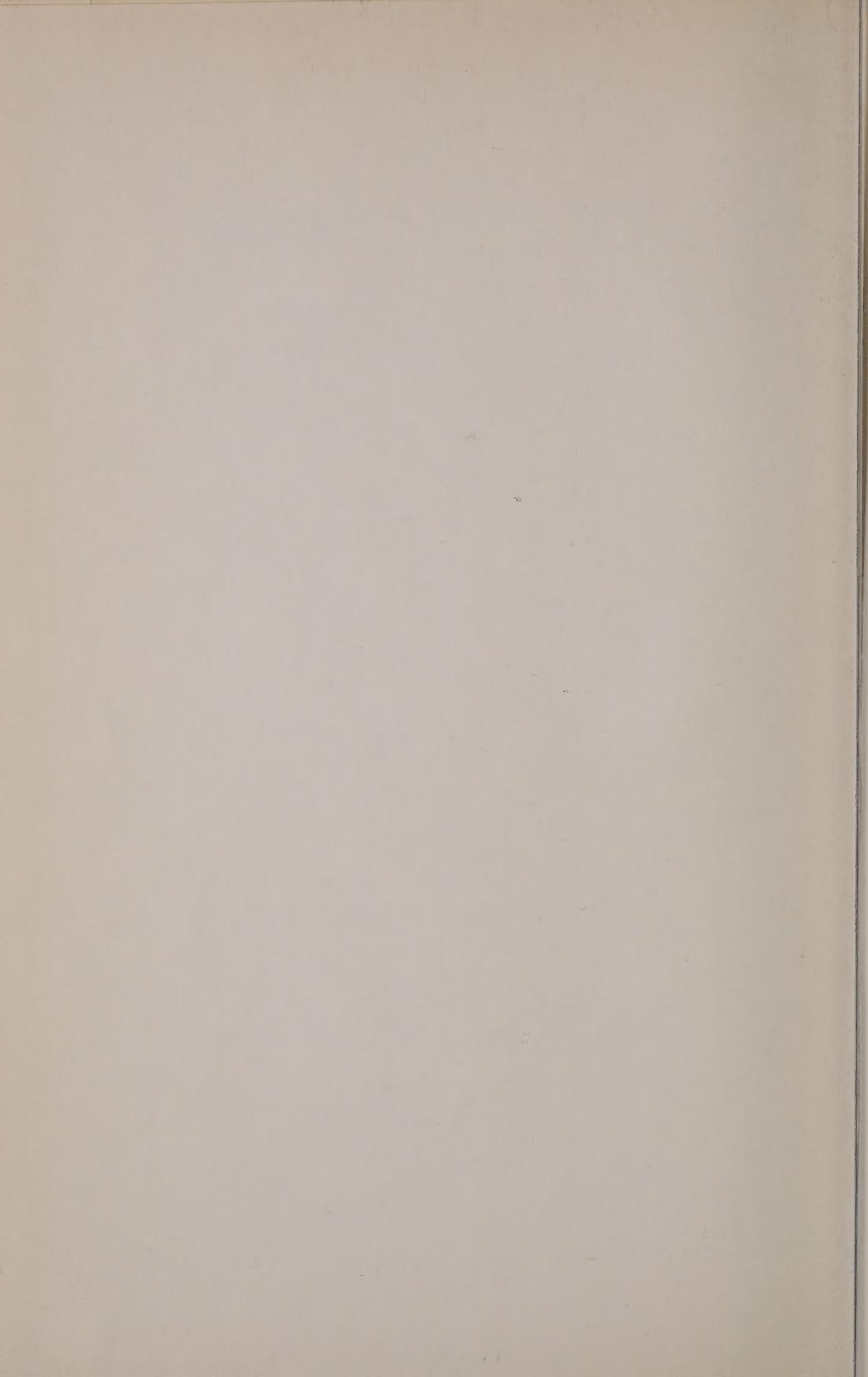
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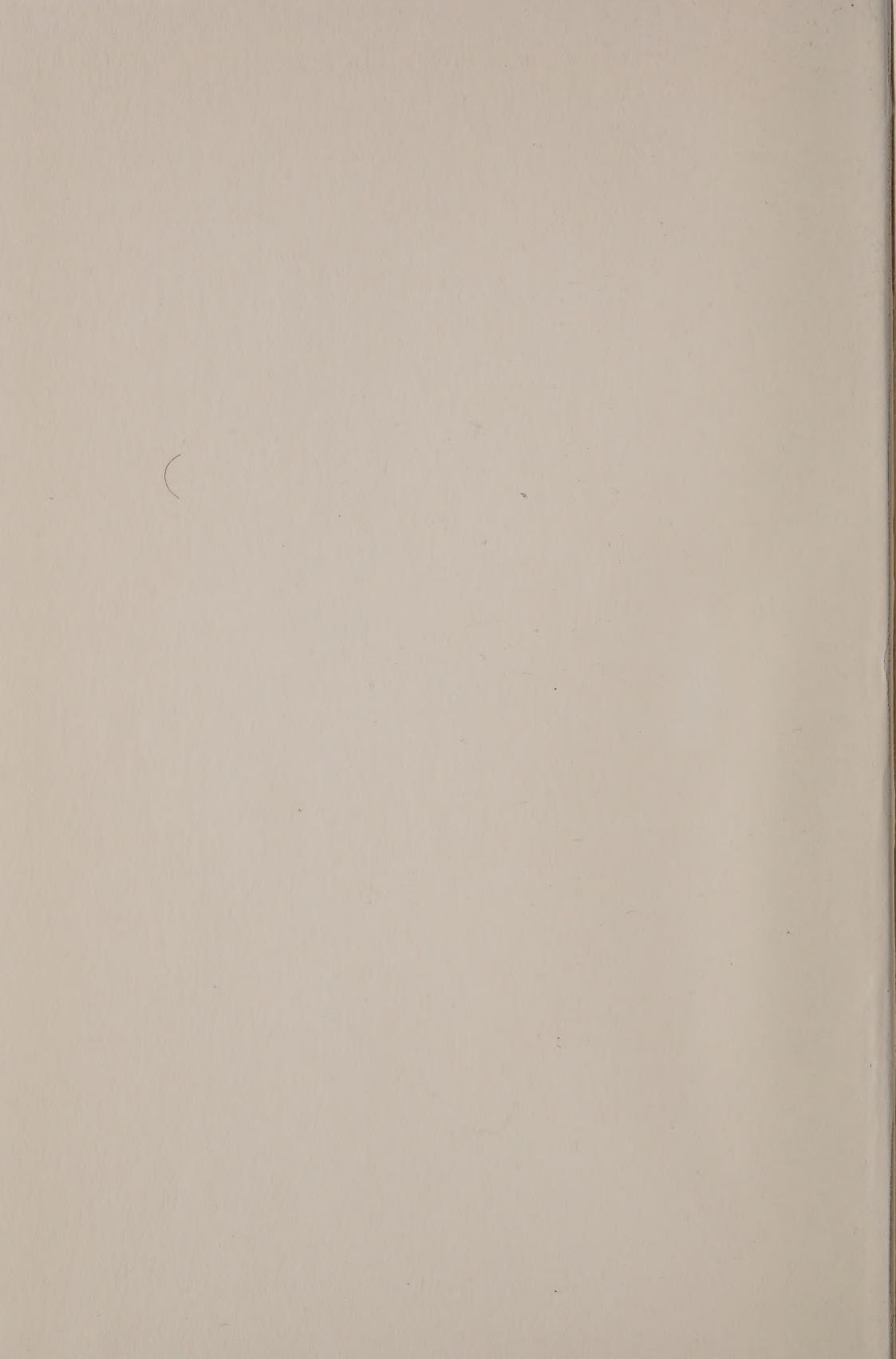


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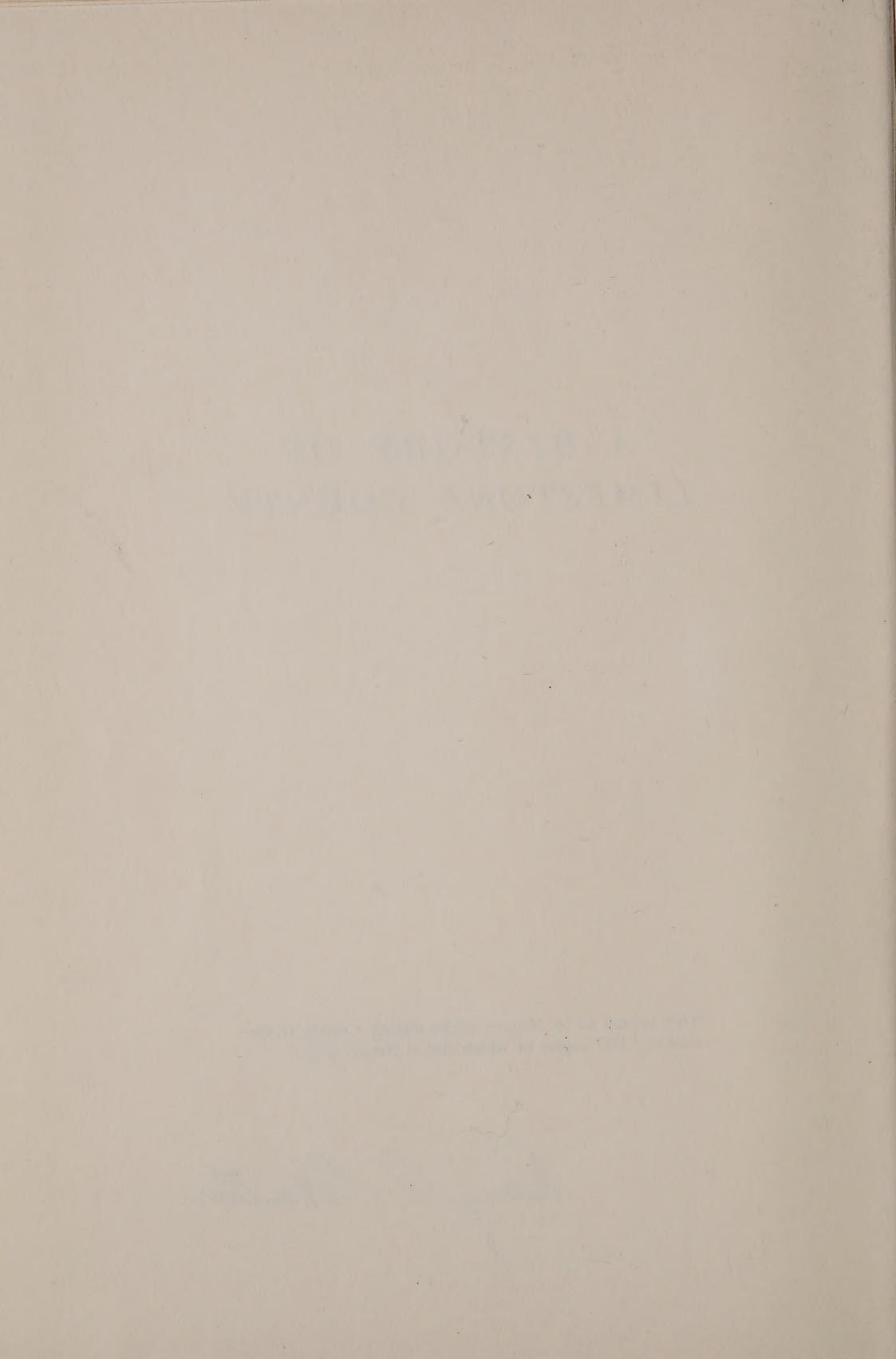




*A HISTORY OF
LIMESTONE COUNTY*

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Ray A. Walter



A HISTORY OF LIMESTONE COUNTY

By Ray A. Walter

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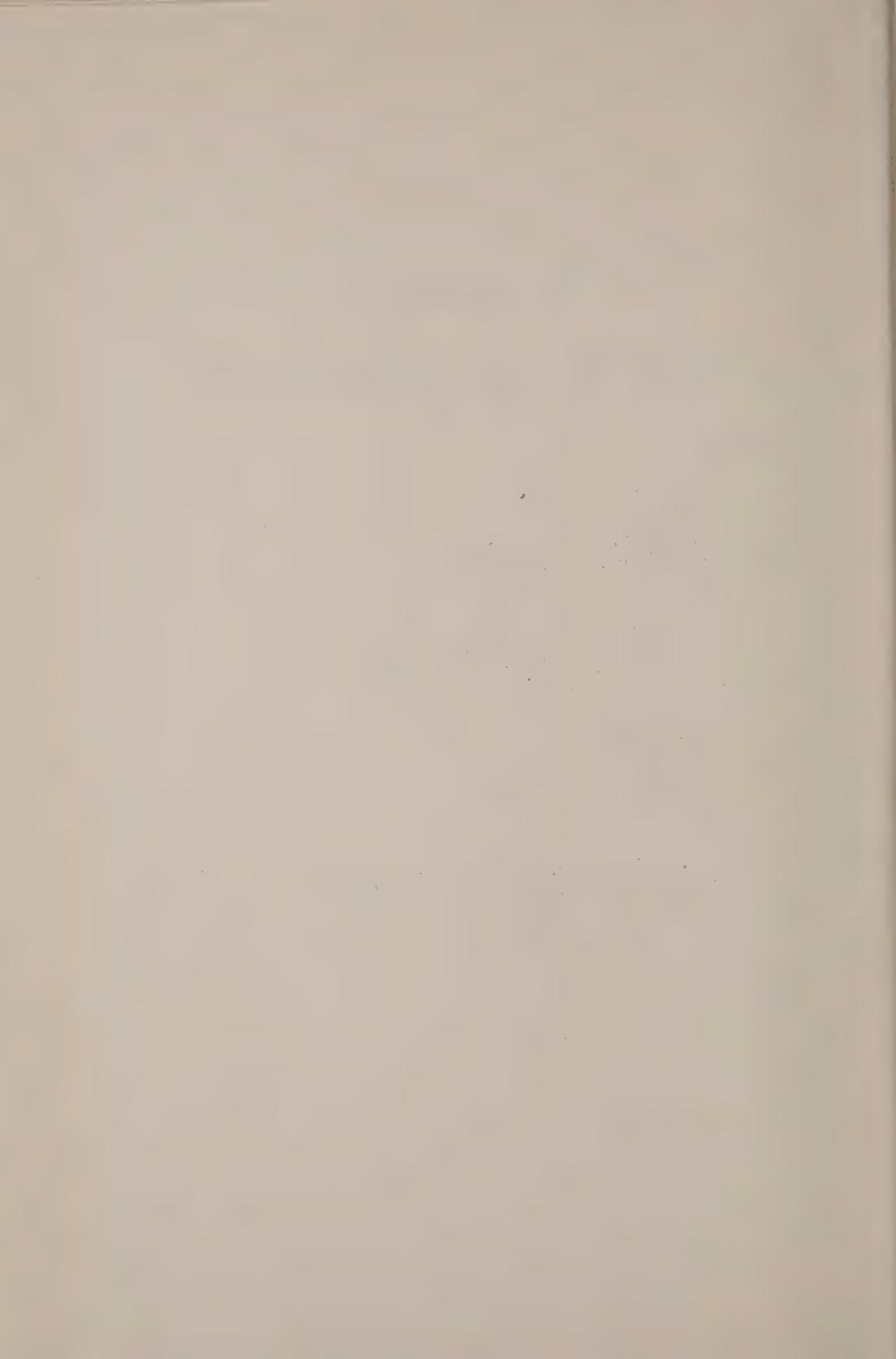
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P R E F A C E

This volume is an attempt to relate some of the historical facts concerned with the migration and settlement of Limestone County between 1835 and 1955. It is not represented as the complete history of the county. At best, it is a piecemeal reconstruction of a bygone era. Much, as yet, remains untold. Destruction of records has blotted out many of the activities which occurred during the first fifty years. Loss of these records has made the task more difficult. For this reason, I have documented much of the work.

Many a brave and daring pioneer will go unnoticed. It is not intentional. Information concerning their lives was not available. Perhaps another will write their story.

Limestone County is an interesting county, rich in history. Tragic martial law periods have left their imprint on the people. Only time will erase many of the black marks credited to these periods.

If errors exist, they are not intentional. Further research will uncover many forgotten and neglected fields.

July 24, 1959

RAY A. WALTER

CHAPTER I

Historical Background

INDIANS

Indian life in Texas has been divided into two periods, "that of the native tribes at a somewhat indefinite time previous to the 30's, before what was known as 'the Cherokees and their Twelve Associate Bands' had entered East Texas,"¹ and the period after their entry. One of the native tribes, the Tehuacanas,² lived in the county, having moved from the upper Colorado River region.

Tehuacanas, a Caddoan tribe of the Wichita group, settled in the area after the French and Indian War but before 1778-1779 when they were visited by the Spanish explorer, De Mézières. As a member of the Caddoan confederacy, they were friendly with several other tribes such as the Anadarko, Bidai, Keechi, Towash, and Waco, but hated the Apache and Comanche.

In tribal days Tehuacanas were generally described as being hospitable and reliable. Though divided into several villages, the main village in the hills which bear their name, contained several good-sized, well-shaped, straw huts. After their conflicts with the Cherokees, a small fortress about three feet in height with a top made of poles and buffalo skins was built in the limestone rocks; small two-feet square portholes placed around the side of the enclosure were to provide the necessary ventilation. Arbors, drying platforms, and underground granaries were near the huts. Primarily agriculturists, their well cultivated fields provided them with an abundance of fruits.

¹*A Memorial and Biographical History of Navarro, Henderson, Anderson, Limestone, Freestone and Leon Counties*, 308. Hereafter cited as *Memorial History*.

²Other spellings for Tehuacana are: Tahuacano, Towacany, Tewakoni, Teewacany, Tahuacarroe, Tewacana, Tehuacany, Tawakoni, Tohwacanie, Tockanhono, Tawackanie, Tahwoccano, Tawoccano, Towahconnee, Tawokkawni, Tawacaney, Tawakane, Tawacanie, Tehuacano, Tahuacano, Tewalkaney, Tawakany and Teewalkany. The current spelling of the word has been used for convenience.

They were also expert hunters, depending largely on the buffalo for meat, tallow, and robes.

The Tehuacanas must have been considered an important tribe in the early years for they participated in a number of peace treaties and councils. In 1821, their chiefs made a treaty of alliance with the Mexican government. Three years later, Americans were settling Texas and there were mixed emotions and conflicting opinions about the Tehuacanas. J. Child wrote Stephen F. Austin, "I will sweep every Tawakkowni (sic) . . . from the face of the earth."³ One month later, James Cummins informed Austin that the Tehuacanas were very friendly and professed every act of friendship toward the Americans.⁴ Austin did not trust the Tehuacanas and sought to settle several hundred families above the San Antonio Road to prevent the tribe from causing trouble.

Entry of the Cherokees into East Texas presented many new problems to the Caddoan confederacy. During the winter, 1828-1829, scouting Waco succeeded in stealing or stampeding the herd of horses from these invaders. A council was held and the more civilized Cherokees decided not to make a raid against the Wacos until their corn was planted. In the spring a Cherokee war party attacked the Waco village and was succeeding in their battle until Tehuacana warriors came to the aid of their Waco allies. Outnumbered, the Cherokees were forced to retreat to their camp. They were determined to punish the Tehuacanas for their interference. Austin learned of this plan and informed Ahumada, one of the Tehuacana chiefs, "The Cherokee Indians had been directed to attack the Tahuacano (sic) village."⁵

Retaliating Cherokees surprised the Tehuacanas in a raid and as the warriors prepared for battle, the women and children were rushed into the fortress. The warriors were unable to find protection and they, too, sought safety in the fortress. A wise Cherokee warrior realized their protection was poorly ventilated and suggested stuffing grass into the portholes and setting fire to it. Revenge being the purpose of their mission, the plan was adopted and carried into effect. Flames and strangulation caused the inmates to unroof the fortress and leap out. Those attempting to escape were killed and the surviving women and children were made prisoners.⁶ Though weakened by this attack, the remaining Tehuacanas returned to the hills and rebuilt their main village.

For years, the Tehuacanas were noted traders and their villages served as markets. The Tonkawa brought thousands of buffalo and deer-skins and other products to barter with them.⁷ Arms, ammuni-

³Eugene C. Barker, *The Austin Papers*, II, part 1, 736.

⁴Ibid., 755.

⁵Ibid., part 2, 1323.

⁶J. W. Wilbarger, *Indian Depredations in Texas*, 178.

⁷Muriel H. Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma*, 249.

tion, and tobacco formed the basis for their trade with foreigners.⁸ However, these trade relations often led to war against foreigners.

By 1833, the Tehuacanas were openly hostile toward the settlers of the Colorado but friendly toward others. Americans at the Falls of the Brazos persuaded Canoma, one of the chiefs, to negotiate with hostile tribes for the return of two white captives. On his return he reported the Indians would treat with the Brazos people but not with the Colorado people. Travelers employed Canoma to recover stolen horses and while on this trip Colorado people killed the chief and his son. The tribe became incensed over this cold-blooded act and under their war-chief declared war against the Coloradoans.

Another ally, the Keechis, had an encounter with Colorado people and Robert M. Coleman organized a company and led them against the Tehuacana village. The Indians were warned and escaped. Coleman was unable to retaliate and punish the Tehuacanas. After Coleman's attack the Tehuacanas and Wacos became, more or less, associated with the Comanches in their depredations toward the settlers of Robertson's Colony.

In 1838, Holland Coffee negotiated a treaty of peace with the Tehuacanas. However, during 1844, Sam Houston's policy of making peace treaties with the Indians resulted in the Comanche, Keechi, Waco, Caddo, Anadarko, Ioni, Delaware, Shawnee, Cherokee, Lipan, and Tehuacana tribes agreeing to live peacefully, ending the Indian troubles in the county.

Only evidences that the Tehuacanas lived in the county are many legends about buried treasures. War against the Spanish has given rise, perhaps, to many of these legends. According to one tale, Spanish traders travelling in the area made camp near the Tehuacana springs. Fearing they were in danger, they unloaded gold bars from their pack mules and buried it near the springs, marking the spot with huge limestone rocks on which they painted pictures of serpents. A young Tehuacana brave observed the activities and informed the chief. Being superstitious, they felt the gold had been cursed and refused to retrieve it. In later years, three men tried to retrieve the gold but when they reached the cache swore fire leaped from the hole. These men became scared, covered the hole, and left the gold for future generations to retrieve.

In 1801, the first advance of American expansion, Philip Nolan, was killed in a battle with Spaniards near the present site of Waco;⁹ the object of the expedition was the catching of wild horses but the Spanish looked upon the mission with suspicion for it was suspected that Nolan cherished the secret intention of making discoveries in the

⁸Eugene C. Barker, *Readings in Texas History*, 52.

⁹Barker, *Readings in Texas History*, 7. Authorities do not agree as to the place of Nolan's death. However, it is safe to assume he was killed in the Central Texas area.

reputed gold regions of the Comanches.¹⁰ After the United States relinquished her claims to Texas by the Florida Treaty, the people of Natchez, Mississippi, were so displeased that they not only protested against the action but organized an expedition under the command of Dr. James Long to invade Texas and establish a republic.¹¹ In June 1819 he left Natchez with about seventy-five men, and when he set up the provisional government at Nacogdoches and declared Texas to be a free and independent republic, he was able to muster over three hundred men.¹² Dr. Long sent his brother, David Long, and a Captain Johnson to establish trading posts along the Trinity and Brazos Rivers; trading posts were established at the upper crossing of the Trinity, Koasiti village on the Trinity, the falls of the Brazos, Pecan Point on the Red River, and below Washington-on-the-Brazos.¹³ At the time of Long's invasion of Texas, the royalist army of Mexico had been successful in their dealings with home affairs and were prepared to defend the provinces; Colonel Ignacio Perez and his Spanish force attacked the trading post at the falls of the Brazos, capturing Captain Johnson and ten of his men.¹⁴ Escaping fugitives fled to Walker's fort below Washington but each of the scattered detachments were defeated. With the death of David Long at the Koasiti village, the forces evacuated Texas. However, Dr. Long took advantage of the renewed revolution in Mexico and returned to Texas, making his home at Bolivar Point. After receiving news of the death of Dr. Long, Mrs. Jane Long returned to the United States.

EMPRESARIOS

Originally, the land in Limestone County was included in the Hayden Edwards and Robert Leftwich empresario grants made by the Coahuila and Texas legislature in 1825. Edwards contract was not carried out because Governor Don Victor Blanco annulled the grant in 1826 and ordered Edwards and his colonists out of Texas. With the revocation of Edwards' contract, the territory included in it, along with some others, was divided among David G. Burnet, Joseph Vehlein and Lorenzo de Zavala. On December 22, 1826, Burnet's contract called for the introduction of three hundred families within the following boundaries:

Beginning at the town of Nacogdoches; thence on a north course, the distance of fifteen leagues to a point clear of the

¹⁰William Kennedy, *Texas: The Rise, Progress, and Prospects of the Republic of Texas*, 230.

¹¹H. Yoakum, *History of Texas from Its First Settlement in 1685 to Its Annexation to the United States in 1846*, I, 199.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 201.

twenty boundary leagues, parallel with the river Sabine, . . . and thence on a line running west to Navasota Creek, thence down said creek with its meanderings, by its left bank, to the place where it is crossed by the road leading from Bexar to Nacogdoches; thence with said road to fork of the Bull's Hill (Lomoe del Toro) road. . . .¹⁵

Burnet, Vehlein and de Zavala sold their contracts to a company in New York, executed to them an irrevocable power of attorney, by which they transferred and relinquished all of their control and authority in the several grants. The company converted their purchases into a Wall Street speculation and flooded the country with land scrip. Transfer of the grants was ratified by the Mexican government and a company agent was established at Nacogdoches. Little was done toward the legitimate colonization of the grant. At an early date, the Rachel Leach Controversy settled the boundaries.¹⁶

Land claim battles began on April 15, 1825, when an empresario grant was approved for Robert Leftwich, agent for "The Texas Association" of Tennessee.¹⁷ The boundaries of the territory of this contract are:

"Beginning on the western bank of the Navasota Creek, at the crossing of the upper road leading from Bexar to Nacogdoches, thence with said road westwardly, to the dividing ridge between the waters of the rivers Brazos and Colorado; thence with this ridge of hills northwest, to strike the comanche trace or road to Navasota Creek; thence with its meanderings downwards, to the place of beginning.¹⁸

Before families could be brought into this part of the province, the Leftwich contract underwent delays and changes that were not settled until the eve of the revolution against Mexico.

Leftwich's associates were perplexed and chagrined, on his return to Tennessee, to find that the grant was in his name and not of the company. Disputes arose over claims and, finally, the company agreed to compensate Leftwich for his claims in exchange for his conveyance of the contract to the company with a reservation that he act as empresario in all relations with the government that could not be performed by an agent.¹⁹ In 1826, an attempt at colonization was begun when Sterling C. Robertson—one of the original fifty-two stockholders of the company—and several other men came to begin actual settle-

¹⁵John Sayles and Henry Sayles, *Early Laws of Texas*, I, 146.

¹⁶Memorial History, 83.

¹⁷Eugene C. Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of Texas, 1793-1836*, 330.

¹⁸Sayles and Sayles, *Early Laws of Texas*, I, 143.

¹⁹Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin*, 331-334.

ment. These settlers became discouraged by the confusion incident to the Fredonian rebellion in the nearby Hayden Edwards colony.

Two years after Leftwich's original grant, no colonization had been made by the company, and again, the Nashville Company prepared for another beginning. On March 27, 1827, the company asked the government for (1) recognition of the company as the true owner of the contract, (2) the substitution of Hosea H. League as empresario and agent, (3) extension of the land, and (4) an extension of the term for making settlements.²⁰ In effect, the company was asking for the annulment of the Leftwich contract and the formation of a new six-year contract with the company. These terms, which were in petition of Hosea H. League, were sent to Saltillo and presented by Stephen F. Austin. League had visited Texas in the summer of 1826 and was so impressed by Austin's colony that he contracted with Austin to introduce ten families in his colony. When League returned with the ten families, he empowered Austin to present the petition in behalf of the Nashville Company. Austin begged that the terms of the petition be reviewed and granted and his argument was very persuasive for terms of the petition were granted with the exception of time beyond the original limitation of six years in which to settle a minimum of one hundred families.²¹ The new boundary was extended in the northeast to lie across the most northern source of San Gabriel River to the Cross Timbers east of the Brazos River.²²

In the fall of 1828, Sterling C. Robertson with a new basis for colonization was scheduled to bring twenty to thirty families but there is no evidence that he came to Texas at this time. Amos Edwards and William H. Wharton probably would have settled in the colony if they had had faith in the enterprise.²³

League's appointment renewed the hope of the company, and preparations were made to fulfill its contract with the government. Another misfortune befell the company for League was accused of being an accomplice to a homicide, was imprisoned, and guarded for at least sixteen months. People became outraged at this violation of law and justice and presented a petition with six hundred or more names to the alcalde. This persecution was so bitter and unreasonable that the alcalde could do nothing but release League.²⁴

During 1830, a short time before the original contract was to expire, a sub-company was formed under the Nashville Company to settle three hundred families during the following autumn and winter. This new organization was composed of Sterling C. Robertson and

²⁰*Ibid.*, 334.

²¹*Ibid.*, 138.

²²*Ibid.*, 336 ff.

²³*Ibid.*, 336-339.

²⁴*Memorial History*, 314.

Alexander C. Thompson; League authorized Robertson to act as his agent in the settlement.²⁵ The Law of April 6, 1830, was passed preventing further American colonization and cancelling contracts which had not settled a minimum of one hundred families.²⁶ Robertson and a group of settlers had departed for their new homes and were confiding in kindness and good faith of the government and the important principle in the constitution prohibiting the passage of retroactive law violating the law of contracts.²⁷ To return to their former homes would be ruinous and they proceeded with all their property and their hopes. On October 25, 1830, Sterling C. Robertson and six companions reported to the Mexican consul, Colonel Francisco Ruiz, at Tenoxtitlan.²⁸ On November 12, Robertson reported that "nine families were encamped at the crossing below, and that 'many others ought to arrive in a few days at the same place'."²⁹

Colonization was actually beginning, but after April 6, 1830, it was not legal. Teran had issued instructions not to permit Americans to enter unless they had passports.³⁰ Thompson and several families had been stopped at Nacogdoches, but he and four companions were permitted to join Robertson at Tenoxtitlan. Again, Austin interceded in behalf of the company and its colonists and used his position and influence in an attempt to secure permission for Thompson and Robertson to settle their families.³¹ The Mexican authorities told Robertson that he would not receive title for his land, and that his and Thompson's families must leave the country.³² Austin said that this activity in behalf of Robertson destroyed his influence with the government at a time when that influence was essential to secure the best interests of his colonists.³³

Colonists who might have settled in the Leftwich grant were given lands in other grants. Finally, Teran suggested to Austin that he ask permission for them to settle in his colony; this request was approved September 26, 1831, after Austin was unable to effect the reinstatement of Robertson and his grant.³⁴ Thompson had returned to Tennessee for more families and, apparently, was still ignorant that the contract had been suspended. He returned in April, 1831, and asked

²⁵Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin*, 339.

²⁶Ibid., 308.

²⁷Memorial History, 315.

²⁸Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin*, 339.

²⁹Ibid., 340.

³⁰E. W. Winkler, *Manuscript Letters and Documents of Early Texans 1821-1845*, 101-102.

³¹Memorial History, 315.

³²Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin*, 342.

³³Memorial History, 318.

³⁴Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin*, 342.

for land in Austin's colony, and probably received it. None of Thompson's colonists received titles to land in the Leftwich grant.³⁵

Meanwhile, Gabriel Laisne de Villaueque made an application for a French company, the Villaueque Brothers, for a grant of land north of the Bexar-Nacogdoches road to the 32nd parallel and east and west between the 95th and 98th meridians of longitude.³⁶ This application was forwarded to Austin for information concerning previous land grants in this area. Carefully studying the situation, Austin replied that this area was included in the Nashville Company and Burnet grants but made a suggestion that lands might be available bordering on the Red River. Fearful of the government's desire to balance European and Mexican colonists against Anglo-Americans, Austin received a grant to the expiring Leftwich grant on February 25, 1831. This new contract called for "a great extension west and northwest of the Nashville Company."³⁷

In 1831, Robertson began a long struggle to prove to the Mexicans that he had settled one hundred families before the restricted immigration order became effective. Austin was in Mexico trying to get the Law of April 6, 1830, repealed and was ignorant of Robertson's suit. Samuel M. Williams attempted a defense against Robertson's charges of "bad faith" and the illegality of the contract of February 25, 1831, succeeding the Nashville Contract. Robertson's influence on Acting Governor Viduarri y Villasenor assured success for the Nashville Company. On April 29, 1834, the legislature granted a four year's extension³⁸ and premium lands to Robertson followed by a declaration from the governor saying that the contract of February 25, 1831, was merely condition and void in so far as it covered Robertson's grant. Furthermore, "settlers introduced by Austin and Williams should retain the lands with they were invested, but should not be counted by any empresario in claims for premium land. Families previously introduced by Robertson should be seated. This could be done without federal complications, because the repeal of the Law of April 6, 1830, was soon to be effective."³⁹

In 1834, Robertson began the work of actual settlement, deserted old Nashville, and made his colony capital at Viesca, near the falls of the Brazos. William H. Steele was appointed by the governor as a commissioner to tissue titles. On December 22, 1833, John Goodloe Warren Pierson, a surveyor, was given the power of attorney to issue certificates to those wishing to settle in or become members of the Nashville Company.

³⁵Ibid., 342.

³⁶Ibid., 345.

³⁷Ibid., 346.

³⁸Sayles and Sayles, *Early Laws of Texas*, I, 125.

³⁹Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin*, 362-363.

Further litigation was threatened by the empresarios and though the Revolution changed the fate of the lawsuit for possession of the Leftwich grant, impression of further events were added to the history of the controversy. On March 31, 1835, Williams filed a general complaint against Robertson's commissioner, Steele, and asked for his suspension pending an investigation.⁴⁰ Borrego, a Mexican administrator, admitted that they had been deceived during the former trial to ascertain the ownership of the Nashville contract and pronounced that the judicial power should have rendered the decision. The legislature issued a decree on May 18, 1835, which stated "any decision by any other authority is null," and the colony was returned to Austin and Williams with a reservation that the rights of settlers under Robertson should be respected.⁴¹

Grants made by Samuel M. Williams went to:

Manuel Creisneio Rejon	November 18, 1833
Juan Luis Chavert	November 19, 1833
Juan Nepomuceno Acosta	November 21, 1833
Mariano Riva Palacios	November 21, 1833
Andres Varela	November 22, 1833
Pedro Varela	November 23, 1833

Robertson's settlers received the following lands:

John Boyd	July 13, 1835, covering Tehuacana
Robert B. Longbotham	July 24, 1835
Sarah McAnulty	July 7, 1835
Lipscomb Norvell	July 13, 1835 ⁴²
James A. Head	March 18, 1835 ⁴³

Big grants extending on both sides of the Navasota River covered the larger part of the county. That of Pedro Varela, with Mexia on its eastern part, was overlaid in 1835 by several:

James W. Parker	April 1
M. T. Sanchez	October 13
Robert Foote	October 15
Creed S. Engledow	July 13
William FitzGibbins	March 29
Larkin Robertson	November 5
Juan Vasquez	March 29
William J. Hawkins	May 18

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 367.

⁴¹Sayles and Sayles, *Early Laws of Texas*, I, 128.

⁴²*Abstract of Valid Land Claims*, by Burlage and Hollingsworth, shows Lipscomb Norvell received his grant May 11, 1835.

⁴³*Abstract of Valid Land Claims* shows James A. Head received his grant May 18, 1835.

Overlaid claims on the Andres Varela grant included:

Silas M. Parker	April 1
Moses M. Herrin	October 13
Elisha Anglin	February 28 covering Groesbeck
Luther T. M. Plummer	April 1
David Faulkenberry	March 13
Joshua Hadley	February 25
Samuel Frost	April 1

Smaller claims were given to:

Brinkley Davis	March 25
William Young	February 12
William L. Moss	February 15
Jarrett Young	February 25
Robert B. Frost	March 25
Archibald Powell	August 31
Richard Eaton	September 13
Eli Seale	March 18 covering Thornton

Several of the land claims were not certified, resulting in many civil suits. General Antonio Mexia married Carlotta Walker and to this union were born two children: Adelaide Matilda Mexia who married George L. Hammeken and Enrique Antonio. Pedro Varela sold his lands to Carlotta Walker Mexia for use of her daughter, Adelaide Matilda Mexia. Evidence presented to the Supreme Court showed that Carlotta was acting for her husband in his absence. General Mexia, on February 10, 1836, sold the lands to John A. Merle under an authentic act before a notary public in Louisiana and not according to Texas law. Merle announced that he had purchased the lands with funds of Antonio Blandin, deceased. Adelaide Matilda Mexia claimed the land in her own right and the administrators and heirs of Blandin claimed the same land by descent. As a result of this dispute, the question of ownership was carried to the Supreme Court of the United States who decided in favor of Adelaide Matilda Mexia.⁴⁴

Mariano Riva Palacios transferred his lands to Jose Antonio Mexia for his son, Enrique Antonio Guillermo Mexia;⁴⁵ Palacios was the "Godfather" of the younger Mexia. Andres Varela sold his lands to Don Juan Vitalva who placed George L. Hammeken in charge. Hammeken sold the lands to Charles A. Jacobs and William Christy.⁴⁶ Christy and Jacobs appointed Robert Hughes as their agent, giving

⁴⁴Limestone County Deed Records, 207, 366-370.

⁴⁵Limestone County Deed Records, 7, 487-494.

⁴⁶Sale of Lands (situated in Texas) by Juan Vitalva to William Christy and Charles A. Jacobs, 17th June 1836.

him a full power of attorney.⁴⁷ He instituted suits against those who had received grants on the Andres Varela eleven-league survey.⁴⁸ Jacobs sold his interest in the land to H. J. Buddington which prompted Hughes to file suit for one-eighth interest. An injunction was issued forbidding the sale of any land in the survey. The case dragged through the courts for a year, and finally, a decision was given against Hughes.⁴⁹ Following this decision, William Christy sold his interest to H. J. Buddington.⁵⁰ It appeared titles on the Andres Varela survey could then be cleared. In the 1890's a suit in the Circuit Court of the United States settled the lengthy litigation over the Varela survey.⁵¹

Hammeken retained his control of the Manuel Crescencio Rejon and Juan Nepomuceno Acosta grants. Adelaide Hammeken regained title to the Pedro Varela grant. Recognition of the original Mexican grants helped clear many titles. H. W. Williams and L. J. Farrar led to the settlement of a vast amount of land titles. Through their sense of fairness, there has been little land litigation, and that merely over uncertain boundaries in the prairie surveys.

⁴⁷ Jacobs and Christy to Robert Hughes, Power of Attorney, MSS.

⁴⁸ Charles A. Jacobs and William Christy, Petition in Trespass. MSS.

⁴⁹ Robert Hughes vs. William Christy et al. Transcript. MSS. One of the few records from the District Court in Limestone County prior to 1870.

⁵⁰ Limestone County Deed Records, X, 639-640.

⁵¹ S. P. Bossert vs. Fred A. Rice, et al.

CHAPTER II

The Parker Colony

Daniel Parker, father of the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptist doctrine, felt his work in Illinois was completed and decided to find a new area. Being somewhat dissatisfied with the freezing winters, attention was focused on the expanding province of Texas. Visiting the province in 1832 and finding Mexican laws forbidding the establishment of any but a Catholic church, the state religion, in Texas, Daniel Parker paused long enough to study the laws and reasoned that if a church was organized in another state and migrated in a body no laws would be violated. Returning home, a church was organized on July 26, 1833, at Palestine, Illinois.¹ They began selling their property and in August departed from Crawford County, Illinois, in ox-drawn wagons.

On October 20, 1833, in Claiborne Parish, Louisiana, Pilgrim Church held its first church conference since leaving Illinois. Received into membership by letter were Richard and Polly Eaton, Joseph Jordan, Nancy Faulkenberry, Rachael Eaton, Elizabeth Eaton, and Elder Garrison Greenwood.² All of this group, with the exception of Greenwood, were closely identified with Limestone County.

The Pilgrim Church caravan entered Texas by way of Logansport, Louisiana, and proceeded westward until they reached the San Pedro Creek near the present town of Grapeland. Here, for protection, the Parker colony built Fort Brown. Legend has it that James W. Parker as early as 1832 had organized a colonizing expedition to Texas.

Fort Brown was the home of the Parker colony for about a year. James Parker, Silas Parker, and Elisha Anglin visited the Navasota

¹Charter members were: Elder Daniel Parker, Patsy Parker, John Parker, Julian Crist, Rachel Crist, Sallie Brown, and Phoebe Parker. "The Records of an Early Baptist Church I," 1833-1847 in *Texas State Historical Quarterly*, XI, October, 1907, 92.

²Ibid., 92-93.

River area in present Limestone County in the summer of 1834 and, according to James W. Parker, "this was my choice of all Texas. . . . the country on the Navasott is the most fertile, most healthy, and subject to fewer objections than any other part of Texas."³ Each man located a claim, returned to Grimes Prairie and Fort Brown, and began making plans for removal of their families. On October 4, 1834, Pilgrim Church had a conference and agreed that the church book would be given to the largest number of members to "preserve the existence of the church in the wilderness country to the Glory of God."⁴ A minority decided to move.

Deciding to go further was a group consisting of thirty-four persons, sixteen adults and eighteen children.⁵ Arriving in present-day Limestone County, they settled on the west side of the Navasota River, near Groesbeck, and built a fort of split cedar logs covering nearly an acre of land. The fort was conveniently arranged for the separate families. Portholes, through which, in case of an emergency, firearms could be used to repel an attack were included along the walls. All colonists slept inside the fort at night as doors and gates were securely barred and guarded. With completion of the fort, the outlook was most pleasing and encouraging. Happiness was everywhere upon the realization of their long-anticipated hopes—rich and productive land.

The struggling colonists remained here, engaged in avocations of a rural life, hunted the buffalo, bear, deer, and other wild game, and were relatively free from marauding Indians. Colonel R. M. Coleman's invasion of the Keechi village precipitated Indian trouble, and in August 1835 they began their war. Two months later, war with Mexico began which made the winter of 1835-1836 very dangerous for the settlers.⁶ Fort Parker was so situated as to expect the first Indian raids. Hunting and surveying parties were no longer safe as Indians were aroused against the whites. Zacharia N. Morrell described conditions in this region as follows:

Great uneasiness was felt at this time relative to Indian depredations. There were fears of a general outbreak, predicated upon the amount of stealing going on through the country since the war began between the Americans and Mexicans. The Mexicans were evidently encouraging all the wild tribes to exterminate the colonists.⁷

³*The Rachel Plummer Narrative*, 59.

⁴"The Records of an Early Baptist Church," 98.

⁵The writer does not believe 34 persons were in the colony at the time. Elizabeth Dwight, James Pratt Plummer, Abraham Duty, Orlena Parker, Martha M. Parker, and Samuel (?) Frost were born at Fort Parker.

⁶J. W. Wilbarger, *Indian Depredations in Texas*, 219.

⁷Z. N. Morrell, *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness or Forty-Six Years in Texas and Two Winters in Honduras*, 42.

Following the official call for a consultation, elections were held throughout Texas. The Municipality of Viesca sent six delegates: John Goodloe Warren Pierson, Joseph L. Hood, Samuel T. Allen, Albert G. Perry, James W. Parker, and Alexander Thompson.⁸ On October 16, 1835, the Consultation met at San Felipe de Austin and Viesca's delegates were present. Elder Daniel Parker, brother of James, offered a resolution for the creation of a corp of Texas Rangers. Silas M. Parker was authorized by the Consultation to employ and direct the activities of "twenty-five rangers whose business shall be to range and guard the frontiers between the Brazos and Trinity Rivers."⁹ In November of the same year one hundred fifty rangers were ordered to the frontier and Parker was authorized to add ten more men to his ranger company.¹⁰ Such action was taken probably because the Cherokees in East Texas were becoming restless, wanting titles to their lands confirmed. Mexicans and Indians were becoming more bold and rumors floated of uprisings against the whites throughout the republic. The Parkers were steadfast in their desire to remain at Fort Parker.

The election on February 1, 1836, for delegates to the Convention to meet on March 1 was held at eight places in the Municipality of Milam. One of the voting places was at James W. Parker's home at Fort Parker where Elisha Anglin, Silas H. Bates, and Richard Duty were judges and Luther T. M. Plummer, clerk. Twenty-four men voted. At the same time, voters would indicate their preference concerning independence from Mexico; twenty to one opposed independence at Fort Parker.¹¹

Further trouble with the Indians was caused by a small party of settlers from the Colorado attempting to infringe on the rights of the Tehuacanas. Settlers continually molested and annoyed the Indians by attempting to steal their horses. Indians had manifested a civil disposition until these annoyances provoked their resentment and revenge. They repulsed the Colorado settlers, killing Williams, the leader, and wounding Huldaman and a small boy. From this unfortunate event, "the Indians exhibited no little degree of malice and revenge, and would frequently go into the white settlements and steal cattle and other stock."¹² Thus the stage was set for the attack on Fort Parker. Griffin Bayne and others warned the settlers of Indian hostility. Elisha Anglin, David Faulkenberry, and Silas H. Bates moved their families to Fort Houston for safety.

On May 19, 1836, all slept at the fort except James W. Parker, L. D. Nixon, and Luther T. M. Plummer who had gone to work in

⁸Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, I, 508.

⁹Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers, A Century of Frontier Defense*, 22.

¹⁰Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, I, 526-528.

¹¹L. W. Kemp, *Signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence*, 61-64.

¹²Maggie Abercrombie, *History of Limestone County, Texas*, 85-86.

the fields. Suddenly, a restless group of Indians appeared about four hundred yards in the distance. Hoisting a white flag as an indication of peace, a group of warriors approached the fort. Benjamin Parker went to see what they wanted. Supposedly, they inquired about a good camping ground near the springs and asked for a beef. Parker promised the Indians they would have what they wanted. Returning to the fort, Benjamin told the inmates he feared they intended fighting, but said he would return and try to avert it. Women and children tried to dissuade him. He persisted in going, and was immediately surrounded and bludgeoned to death by blood-thirsty, revenge-bent Indians. Sight of blood caused the war party to begin their yelling and whooping which prompted a charge upon the fort, resulting in one of the bloodiest acts in the annals of Texas history. Fortunately, several colonists had fled by this time and others were endeavoring to escape. Silas M. Parker fell outside the fort, trying to save some women and children.

Elder John Parker, Sallie White Parker, and Mrs. Elizabeth Kellogg fled from the fort.¹³ After going a short distance, Indians overtook them, killed Elder John Parker, stabbed and left for dead Granny Sallie Parker, and took Mrs. Kellogg a captive. Samuel M. Frost and his son, Robert, fell inside the fort. Rachel Plummer and her small son, James Pratt, Cynthia Ann Parker, and John Parker were taken as prisoners. The results of the attack may be summed up as five dead, two wounded,¹⁴ and five taken as captives.

As the attack commenced, Mrs. Sarah Nixon, hastened to the fields to tell her husband, father, and brother-in-law, Luther T. M. Plummer, of the impending crisis. Plummer, acting as courier, rode to the neighboring farms, informing Abram Anglin, Seth and Silas Bates, David and Evan Faulkenberry, and Mr. Lunn.¹⁵ James W. Parker and L. D. Nixon started to the fort and met Lucinda Parker and her four children, just as they were overtaken by a number of Indians. Indians forced Lucinda to place Cynthia Ann and John on two warriors' horses but she and her two younger children, Silas M. and Orlena, were being taken back to the fort when Nixon appeared.

Indians were about to kill Nixon when David Faulkenberry, Evan Faulkenberry, Elisha Anglin, and Plummer appeared, causing them

¹³James W. Parker in *The Rachel Plummer Narrative* states his mother-in-law, Mrs. Nixon, was with Elder John Parker and Elizabeth Kellogg. Abram Anglin, who wrote the story for the Groesbeck *Argus* in 1874, refutes Parker's statement and says "Granny" Parker was with Elizabeth Kellogg and Elder John Parker.

¹⁴James W. Parker states only one was wounded seriously. Some historians claim as many as three were wounded. In that Granny Parker and Mrs. John Parker were one and the same, the author is of the opinion only two were wounded: Mrs. Sallie White Parker and Mrs. Nixon or Mrs. Duty.

¹⁵There is a possibility Lunn should be spelled Luhn. Records do not reveal any person by the name of Lunn in the area.

to surrender their prisoners. Indians made several dashes toward them, but were halted by aimed rifles. One venturesome warrior dashed so close to the group that Lucinda's faithful dog seized his horse by the nose, throwing the rider. The war party continued to harass them from a safe distance, charging with drawn arrows and savage yells, then wheeling and fleeing.¹⁶ This continued until the small group had passed through a prairie and neared a heavily wooded area. Fearing they were being led into an ambush, the Indians retreated. This group of survivors hid in the bottoms.

Another group of refugees, led by James W. Parker and George E. Dwight, consisted of the Elizabeth Frost family, James' family, and Dwight's family which, according to James W. Parker, numbered eighteen persons. In this party were twelve children under twelve years of age which indicates there were seventeen young children at the fort.

Abram Anglin, David and Evan Faulkenberry, and Silas Bates started back to the fort to assist the wounded and search for those who might have escaped. Passing in front of Elisha Anglin's house, the "ghost" of Granny Parker "scared us worse than the Indians."¹⁷ Making her as comfortable as possible, the quartet continued to the fort but found no one. After Granny Sallie Parker's silver was recovered, the group returned to Anglin's farm. Placing Granny Sallie on a horse behind Anglin, they returned to their party in the bottoms.

The next morning, younger members of this party returned to the fort, where they found about five horses, a few old saddles, bacon and honey. Fearing a return of the Indians, bodies of the dead were left unburied. They returned to the bottoms and began their three-day trek to Fort Houston.

J. W. Parker's and George Dwight's group did not fare so well. They, too, spent the night in the bottoms. Parker wanted to return to the fort but his companions preferred hunger to the risk of his going back. Their progress was much slower because Mrs. Parker and Elizabeth Frost were the only ones having shoes. Having no food, it was not until the second day that a skunk was killed, cooked, and eaten. On the fourth day, another skunk and two terrapins were cooked and eaten. At dusk of the fifth day the women and children were so exhausted that it was impossible to travel further. Finally, they decided Parker should hurry to the settlement for help. Early the next morning he started for the nearest settlement, reaching it eight hours later.

A Captain Carter and Jeremiah Courtney answered his plea for help, and with five horses accompanied Parker to meet the little

¹⁶Mary Jordan Atkinson, *The Texas Indian*, describes the method of Comanche's assault.

¹⁷D. W. C. Baker, *A Texas Scrapbook*, 198-202, quoting Groesbeck *Argus*.

band of survivors. Six days after the fall of Fort Parker, the group finally reached safety.¹⁸

Twelve men from Fort Houston returned to Fort Parker to bury the dead. Their marked grave is in Fort Parker Memorial Park.¹⁹

This ended the first settlement in present-day Limestone County. Not only was the region void of people but mounted couriers galloped through the outpost settlements in the old Municipality of Milam, disseminating the news of the Indian assault of May 19 on Parker's Fort, and warning the settlers to gather at Nashville for sanctuary. Hostile Indians were known to be raiding in the country.²⁰ These sturdy pioneers will long be remembered in history.

A little-known fact directly associated with the Parker colony concerns the half-brother of Cynthia Ann and John Parker. Silas M. Parker married Lucinda²¹ Duty who bore four children: Cynthia Ann, John, Silas Jr., and Orlena. After Silas' death at the fort, Lucinda married a Mr. Usry; to this union was born Benjamin M. Usry who became one of the old settlers of the county. Later, Lucinda married W. W. Roberts; she died about 1852. Incidentally, Elisha Anglin's wife, Catherine Duty, and Lucinda Duty Parker Usry Roberts were sisters.

¹⁸James W. Parker, *Narrative of the Perilous Adventures, Miraculous Escapes and Sufferings, etc. To which is appended a Narrative of the Capture and Subsequent Sufferings of Mrs. Rachel Plummer, etc.*

¹⁹A geologist-archaeologist was hired to locate the graves. After an exhaustive search and numerous tests, he placed the location of the mass grave approximately one and one-half miles from the old fort. Many relatives of the families are interred here, too.

²⁰Olive Todd Walker, "Esther Amanda Sherrill Cullins," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XLVII (January, 1944), 241.

²¹*Handbook of Texas*, II, 337, lists Silas Parker's wife as Lucy Duty. Records in possession of writer show her name as Lucinda, not Lucy.

CHAPTER III

Robertson County Period

Prior to the separation of Texas from Mexico, there were no political divisions such as counties. On April 28, 1832, the state legislature, at the suggestion of the Texas delegation, introduced the practice of creating municipalities, and directing the election by the people, of municipal officers.¹ Viesca was one of the original twelve municipalities that were established. In October, 1835, Viesca sent John Goodloe Warren Pierson, Joseph L. Hood, Samuel T. Allen, Albert G. Perry, James W. Parker, and Alexander Thompson to the Consultation at San Felipe de Austin.² Perry was elected to the executive advisory council as the representative from Viesca.³ On December 25, the Consultation changed the name of Viesca to Milam,⁴ a memorial to Benjamin Rush Milam who had been killed in the capture of San Antonio. The division of the Municipality of Milam into new counties was begun after the establishment of the Republic in 1836.⁵

On December 14, 1837, Robertson County was one of the first counties to be created from the Municipality of Milam, and embraced territory now included in the counties of Robertson, Brazos, Dallas, Leon, Madison, Limestone, Falls, Freestone, McLennan, Navarro, Ellis, Hill, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, and Tarrant. The act creating Robertson County described this territory as beginning on the Brazos River, at the county line of Washington County, and running on that line easterly to the Trinity River; thence up that river to the northern edge of the Cross Timbers; thence due west to the Brazos River; thence

¹Yoakum, *History of Texas*, I, 304.

²Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, I, 508.

³*Ibid.*, I, 551.

⁴*Ibid.*, I, 1002-1003.

⁵*Ibid.*, I, 1074.

down that river to the beginning point.⁶ Evidently, the creation of this county was on the petition of one hundred free male inhabitants.⁷

In the fall of 1837, a second attempted settlement was made near Fort Parker. Most of those in the fort when it was attacked refused to move back, but families living in the area prior to the attack wanted to return to their homes. A small ranger force was organized at the Falls of the Brazos and near the Trinity which offered some assurance of protection. There was a feeling evident that a growing settlement could be begun. On January 6, 1838, Moses Herrin who owned one league of land near the Navasota River, proposed to give and appropriate five hundred acres of land for the use and benefit of a town to be located at a large spring on the bank of the river.⁸ Land was improved considerably and several log houses were erected. Moses Herrin built himself a nice, substantial house.⁹ The settlement numbered about twelve families before being forced to flee from raiding Indians.¹⁰

Increased Indian hostility was caused by opening the General Land Office.¹¹ Surveying parties and locators had gone onto the frontiers to seek the most desirable lands. Indians, seeing the surveying parties at work, believed the white people would take all their hunting grounds and force them further west. Indians felt they were Lords of the land and fought harder to save them in the Brazos region than any other part of Texas. Frontier Indian atrocities were in resistance of this movement to be pushed again.¹²

In September, 1838, a surveying party of twenty-two men and a boy left Franklin and started northward. At Battle Creek¹³ near the present town of Dawson, Kickapoo Indians attacked the party. About three-fourths of the party were killed in a fight which ensued.¹⁴ A little earlier, another surveying party had been harassed by Indians near Pin Oak Creek and forced to return to Franklin.¹⁵ Richard Sparks had organized a surveying party near Fort Houston to operate in the same vicinity; his party, too, was dispersed by Indians.¹⁶ News of these parties from Franklin and Fort Houston caused the people

⁶Ibid., 1398.

⁷Ibid., 1074.

⁸Limestone County Records (Transcribed), A, 82.

⁹Contract between Louisa Herrin and H. M. Roberts, original in possession of author.

¹⁰Annie Carpenter Love, *History of Navarro County*, 29.

¹¹Yoakum, *History of Texas*, II, 248.

¹²Ibid.

¹³The creek was known as Richland Creek at this time.

¹⁴The Battle Creek Fight. MSS., supposedly written by Jim Mecklin of Hubbard. Limestone County Collection.

¹⁵James T. DeShields, *Border Wars of Texas*, 255.

¹⁶Ibid. and J. W. Wilbarger, *Indian Depredations in Texas*, 360.

of Springfield to again flee to Franklin, Fort Houston, and other protected areas.

In 1839, conditions on the Texas frontier were very threatening. On the east side of the Brazos at Morgan's Point, north of the Falls, Indians attacked the home of George Morgan, killing two men and three women.¹⁷ Ten days later, John Marlin's home was attacked but no damage was done.¹⁸ News of these attacks spread rapidly throughout the area. Settlers realized they had to either stand together to fight the Indians or leave their homes. Not wishing to leave their homes, Benjamin Bryant organized a company to pursue the Indians who attacked the Morgan and Marlin homes. This group located Chief José Maria and his tribe. In the fight that followed, Bryant was killed. Ethan Stroud took command. Stroud was one of the first to settle in present-day Limestone County; dying on August 6, 1848, he was buried on the Stroud ranch near Burr Oak Springs.¹⁹

Captain Thomas Smith organized a ranger company to cover the advance west of the Navasota River and John Karner organized a company for the region east of the Trinity River. Fort Boggy was built as a measure to protect settlements between the Navasota and Trinity Rivers. Captain Thomas N. B. Greer was placed in command of a company that Karner had organized. Also, Congress had authorized a competent force to patrol the region around Fort Milam. The government was attempting to protect the immigrants who were invited by the Republic's homestead law to come to Texas, and the Indians were regarded as the encroacher.

A better organization was made at Franklin in Robertson County to cover the ground of both the other companies.²⁰ It appears the principal scene of actions occurred in eastern Limestone County, now Freestone County. Captain Eli Chandler, one of Sterling C. Robertson's old rangers, was commander of the company but the first lieutenant, William M. Love, was more frequently in command.

Karner recalled fighting Shawnees, Cherokees, Delawares, Kickapoos, Ionis, and Anadarkos.²¹ José Maria was the main leader and Karner boasted, "I had the honor of inflicting the wound on José Maria from which he later died; I inflicted this wound up on the Brazos."²²

Indian atrocities seem to have been widespread. In the summer of 1840, the Gregg family were attacked on the old San Antonio-Nacogdoches Road; Mrs. Gregg, an infant daughter, and two sons

¹⁷Wilbarger, *op. cit.*, 361-367.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Stroud Cemetery Records in Limestone Collection.

²⁰Texas Rangers or Reminiscences of John Karner, 2.

²¹Memorial History, 397.

²²*Ibid.*, 398.

were killed.²³ In the spring of 1841, young Stephen Rogers was killed at Rogers' Prairie in Leon County.²⁴ A messenger was sent to Captain Eli Chandler. Eight men started in pursuit, later followed by Chandler and a large number of men. The party of eight hurried to Horn Hill and lay wait for the enemy. Soon, they discovered Indians chasing buffalo. Charging them, one Indian was killed and another was wounded. Two Indians galloped to the summit of Horn Hill and began circling, which, according to old-timers, is a signal for help. Within a matter of minutes a large number of Indians began advancing at full speed. Approaching Indians thought the eight men belonged to a larger body and failed to charge. Later, after joining Captain Chandler, they learned the murderers of young Rogers had been found. The ranger company had pressed the Indians so closely that they abandoned everything, escaping into the thickets. All their horses and effects were appropriated and several wounds were inflicted on the Indians.²⁵

While Franklin was still the outpost and headquarters of the frontier between the Brazos and Trinity, Captain Thomas I. Smith and Benjamin J. Chambers, surveyors, discovered several Indian parties in the "upper" country. Hardesty and Porter were sent to bring Captain Chandler. Traveling rapidly, on the second day an Indian scout was sighted near Tehuacana. Proceeding cautiously, the company reached a hastily abandoned camp. Small numbers of mounted warriors appeared and sought to decoy the sagacious Chandler to the opposite side. He sent scouts in several directions, and soon the main body was located. Firing from ambush, the ranger company dispersed the Indians. Lieutenant William M. Love and eight men were left in charge of the camp and horses while Chandler attacked the fortified position. The Indians retreated and were being pursued through the bottom when heavy firing was heard at Love's position. Chandler returned hastily and found Love engaged with several warriors who had counter-marched. After a random fight, the Indians were charged and driven into the bottoms. Love and his men had held their position, including booty of the camp.²⁶

Later, Chandler led another expedition in search of hostile Indians. With a company of forty-two men he moved into the upper country. Scouts captured a half-breed Mexican who had been inciting the Indians. Chandler threatened immediate death if he did not lead them to the Indian camp. He readily promised to lead the company northward. Some warriors and squaws were discovered and chased into camp. It was learned the son of Gregg was a prisoner in this particular village. Having fled before the charge, Chandler wished

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*, 399.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 360-361.

to follow the main body, so he stationed seven men at the edge of the prairie and Love and ten men in charge of the camp. Chandler found the main body a short distance from camp. When almost in reach of young Gregg, he retreated, rushing to the assistance of Love and the group stationed at the edge of the prairie. When Chandler reached the scene, between the smoke, the unexpected attack, and the missing guards, he didn't know what to do. The company camped in the vicinity for a night and early the next morning began the long trip back to Franklin.²⁷

At this time there were three large villages and several hundred warriors on and near Village Creek, and they had planned to start a raid down the country the day following Chandler's attack. The Indians probably believed a much larger force of men was nearby, for they were strong enough to have destroyed Chandler's company.

In late summer, Captain Thomas I. Smith led a small party up the east side of the Brazos. Upon reaching the broken highlands, Smith sensed a large body of Indians nearby and determined to return for reinforcements. Before doing so, five Indians chased two of his men into camp. Twenty-two men under George B. Erath and Lieutenant William Love made pursuit, separating at the foot of a rocky hill. As Erath came near a ledge of projecting rock, his party was fired upon by five Indians. A small group halted and concealed themselves to protect Abram Smith's body, while Erath and others continued around the hill. Later, José Maria began descending the hill to scalp Smith but the "concealed party" rose and fired. Wounded by a blast from John Karner's rifle, the old chief caught his horse by the neck, rode out of sight and fell beyond large rocks. Erath and Love, having united, ascended the hill and scattered the remaining Indians. Following this, Captain Smith moved homeward, but not without apprehension of an attack by larger numbers.²⁸

On July 5, 1842, Sam Houston appointed four commissioners to deal or "treat with the Indians on the frontiers of Texas." These commissioners were Henry E. Scott, Ethan Stroud, Joseph Durst, and Leonard Williams.²⁹ Houston asked Luis Sanchez to go with the group as an interpreter.³⁰

Such vigorous treatment made matters less difficult for the rangers between that time and their disbanding in 1844, when they became leaders in the regions for which they had fought. Between 1842 and 1844 more attention was being focused on Mexicans activities than Indians.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker, *The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863*, III, 53ff.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 91.

In 1845, four companies of the army of the Republic were recruited for frontier duty. The squad operating for protection of the citizens of northern Robertson County had headquarters on Tehuacana Creek.³¹ Sam Houston accused Ethan Stroud and Beden Stroud, Indian agents in the Trinity district, of trading and using influence against a treaty and peace with the Indians.³² He instructed John Torrey to help prepare a council to meet at Tehuacana Creek.³³ During October of 1844, Commissioners of the Republic of Texas³⁴ and the chiefs and head men of the Comanche, Keechi, Waco, Caddo, Anadarko, Ioni, Delaware, Shawnee, Cherokee, Lipan, and Tehuacana met in council and "accepted, agreed to, and signed a treaty" ending war against the whites.³⁵ The period of Indian warfare in Robertson County was ended. Again, the area was opened for settlement.

³¹James K. Greer, *A Texas Ranger and Frontiersman, The Days of Buck Barry in Texas, 1845-1906*, 24.

³²Williams and Barker, *Writings of Sam Houston*, IV, 258-260.

³³*Ibid.*, 311-313. H. G. Bishop, *Texas Indian Troubles*, 78-90.

³⁴Commissioners of the Republic of Texas were Thomas I. Smith, J. C. Neill, and E. Morehouse. Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, II, 1191.

³⁵Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, II, 1191-1195.

CHAPTER IV

The Years 1846 to 1860!

The Texas State Constitution of 1845 included a clause permitting the legislature to create new counties. Certain restrictions were placed in this clause:

The Legislature shall . . . establish new counties for the convenience of the inhabitants of such new county or counties. Provided, that no new county shall be established, which shall reduce the county or counties, or either of them, from which it shall be taken, to a less area than nine hundred square miles.¹

Texas annexation created many problems. The first state legislature had herculean labors to perform in "reforming and adjusting the laws to the new conditions of affairs."²

In 1845, residents of northern Robertson County were burdened and inconvenienced by the remote distance to Franklin. Settlement of the Indian trouble prompted people to settle in northern Robertson County so rapidly that there were more than the one hundred petitioners necessary for the creation of a separate county. The act of April 11, 1846, creating Limestone County, reads:

Section 1. Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas, That all that portion of Robertson county included in the following bounds, be, and the same is hereby created into a new county to be called annd known by the name of Limestone, to wit: Beginning at the northeast corner of Leon county, on the Trinity River; thence, with the line of said county to the Brazos River; thence, up the east bank of said river to the mouth of Tehuacana Creek, where it empties into

¹Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, II, 1295.

²John Henry Brown, *History of Texas from 1685 to 1892*, II, 317.

said river; thence, north, sixty degrees east, to the Trinity River; thence, down the west bank of said river to the place of beginning. And the inhabitants residing in the said bounds shall be entitled to all the rights, privileges and immunities incident to the citizens of the original counties, except, the right of separate representation in the legislature, (until entitled thereto by numbers,) and the right of a separate land district. And the citizens of said county shall vote with Robertson county for Senator and Representatives until otherwise provided for by laws; and that this act take effect and be in force from and after its passage.³

On April 18, 1846, the Legislature passed an act establishing the "seat of justice of Limestone county at Springfield."⁴

Organizataion was completed on August 18, 1846, with the election of the following officers: George Cox as Chief Justice, James M. Davis as Probate Judge, John H. Arnett as District Clerk, Clinton C. Owen as County Clerk, Emanuel Clement as Sheriff, Joseph H. Williams and William Biggs as Justices of the Peace, Precinct 1, and John N. Claypool and William Johns as Justices of the Peace, Precinct 4.⁵ It was not until September, however, that Clinton C. Owen had received books to start recording deeds and other instruments⁶ Pleasant C. Whitaker became assessor and the first tax roll was completed on February 16, 1847.⁷ This roll lists 213 different names which, to some extent, illustrates the size of the county. Originally, all land between the Brazos and Trinity Rivers and north of Robertson County to Navarro County was included in Limestone. Many names prominent in the history of Falls, Freestone, Hill, and McLennan Counties are included.

Limestone County had at least two courthouses at Springfield. After Springfield was designated as the county seat, a wooden building thirty feet long and twenty feet wide,⁸ was built to house the county records. D. Port Smythe said of the structure, "The Court House is a very humble edifice, only intended for temporary use."⁹ However, it was not until 1856 that a more commodious, two story, brick building was erected. In June, 1873, this building was condemned by the court, and a building was purchased from Joseph Booth Tyus. On Octo-

³Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, II, 1378-1379.

⁴Ibid., 1398.

⁵Election Register No. 257, 1846-1847, 86.

⁶Deed, Elisha Anglin to John Anglin, recorded September 7, 1846, Book A, 3-4. (Original in Anglin papers in Limestone Collection.)

⁷Tax Returns in State Comptroller's Office, Austin, Texas. Reconstructed Tax Roll of Limestone County, Texas, may be found in the Appendix.

⁸Hampton Steele, *A History of Limestone County, 1833-1860*, 14.

⁹The Leon Weekly, June 16, 1852.

ber 24, 1873, this building was destroyed by fire and all county records were lost which accounts for so few recorded facts of the early years.¹⁰

Prior to organization, settlers and home-seekers migrated to the region, coming from Northern, Eastern and Southern states. A year after organization, there were 333 registered voters and a total population of 1,856.¹¹ Braving the many hardships of pioneer life, searching for new adventures, and hearing glowing reports of the riches to be found attracted still others.

So great was the influx of settlers in these early years that a general movement for creation of new counties began. By an act approved March 20, 1848, the northern boundary line was changed,¹² and the western boundary was altered with the creation of Falls and McLennan Counties.¹³ Less than a month later, the Legislature defined again the boundaries of the county which, by this time, was much reduced in size.¹⁴ Citizens in the eastern part of the county began clamoring for their own local government, and on September 6, 1850, the Legislature created Freestone County.¹⁵ With the exception of a correction of the boundaries on November 2, 1866, the county was defined by its present form.

Limestone County contains 932 square miles and is in the form of a rectangle, slightly elongated north and south with its northeast corner cut diagonally. Its surface is generally undulating and is drained by the Navasota River, flowing north and south through the county, and by several creeks and branches. It is watered by the Springfield spring, Sulphur spring, and numerous small springs.

Geographically, the county is located between the thirty-first and thirty-second parallels of north latitude and the nineteenth and twentieth degrees of west longitude. Almost two-thirds of the area is rolling prairie and the remainder is covered by timber indigenous to the area. The soil varies from a black waxy to a sandy loam. Highest point in the county is Tehuacana with an elevation of 575 feet above sea-level. Lowest point is Karnes with an elevation of 411 feet above sea-level.

SPRINGFIELD

Moses Herrin's appropriation for a town stipulated that any citizen improving and residing within the five hundred acres one year from and after February 1, 1838, should receive at least four lots not exceeding one acre, together with that proportion of ground necessary for public streets. A clause was included "if damages and fears from

¹⁰Police Court Minutes, A, 5.

¹¹Bracht, *Texas in 1848*, 62.

¹²Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, II, 207.

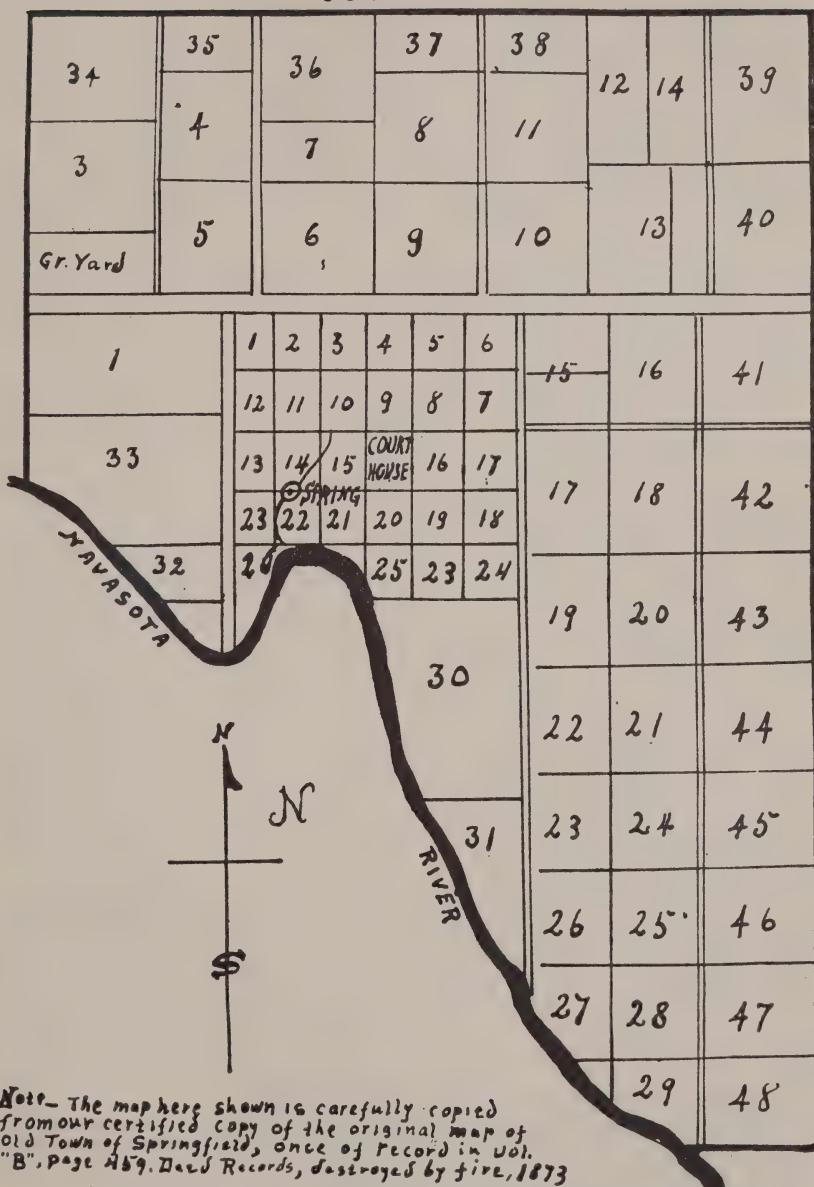
¹³*Ibid.*, III, 525, 501.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, III, 550.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, III, 821.

PLAT OF SPRINGFIELD

**SPRINGFIELD TOWN
500 Ac.**



Note.—The map here shown is carefully copied from our certified copy of the original map of Old Town of Springfield, once of record in Vol. "B," Page 459, Deed Records, destroyed by fire, 1873.

Courtesy of Lone Star Abstract Company

our common enemies should cause said citizens as may settle on the town lots or lands belonging to said town to retire for safety from said premises, that their absence shall not prejudice their claims to such grounds as shall be assigned them according to the intent and meaning of the foregoing instrument unless such citizens shall not return within six months after such damages are passed.”¹⁶ Elisha Anglin and George Calmes were appointed to lay off a town within the five hundred acres to be called Springfield as a tribute to the beautiful spring around which the town was built, and, perhaps, in memory of their former homes at Springfield, Illinois. Terms of the appropriation were not carried out in 1838 or 1839 because Indian hostilities forced the inhabitants to flee to Fort Houston and other settlements for safety.

Logan Almaren Stroud was the first permanent settler in the Springfield vicinity. Shortly after his birth in Morgan County, Georgia, the family moved to Alabama, and in 1837 to Robertson county where 640 acres of land were located. On May 19, 1842, Logan Stroud married Jane Elizabeth Harlan,¹⁷ and because of unhealthy conditions in the Brazos bottoms moved to Burr Oak Springs which was, at the time, a lonesome place as there were “no farms and the country being occupied by wild Indians, and the prairies roaming with panthers, bears, buffalo and other wild game.”¹⁸

Land was here for all who would pay the government a few cents per acre. Early settlers looked first for the two prime necessities of pioneer life: water and wood. Wood was essential not only for cooking and heating but for all building purposes as well. Of these pioneer homes, Elizabeth Love Prendergast said, “The houses were all built of logs, notched at the ends and filled in between with sticks and clay called chinking and daubing. Doors were made from rough planks hewn out of logs, roofs from riven shingles two feet long and made in the same way. There was no glass for windows and settlers had only what nails they had brought from their old homes in the States, so windows were merely openings sawed out of the logs and provided with rough sliding panels.”¹⁹

Prairie lands were of little value, unless there was timber nearby. Most houses were built near timberlands, and farms were on sandy land. These settlers were self-sufficient, raising corn and wheat which was ground into meal and flour. The meat problem was easily solved as there were plenty of fat beefeves and hogs and an abundance of native game such as deer, turkey, geese, duck, pigeon, quail, buffalo, and bear.

¹⁶Limestone County Records (Transcribed), A, 82.

¹⁷Robertson County Marriage Licenses reveals that on October 11, 1838, Augustus W. Cooke married Jane Elizabeth Harlan. On May 19, 1842, Logan A. Stroud married Jane E. Cooke (nee Harlan).

¹⁸Groesbeck Journal, October 13, 1910.

¹⁹Pioneer Days in Texas. MSS in possession of J. K. Parker.

Settlers from the older southern and eastern parts of Texas began moving into the area. The twelve pioneer settlers following Stroud included Abram, Elisha, John, Moses, and William Anglin; John Baker, Seth Bates, William Burns, George W. Cox, Samuel Nelson, Forest Phifer, and John D. Smith. None of these were native-born. Four were natives of Tennessee, three of Virginia, two of Illinois, and one each of Georgia, Kentucky, New Jersey, and Ohio.

Immigration in the early forties was steady, and Springfield readily became the center of all activity. People from the north, east, and south continued moving into the region, bought land, built homes, and turned their attention to stock-raising and farming. It readily became an area of prosperity and plenty.

Alfonso Steele²⁰ was born in Hardin County, Kentucky, on April 9, 1817. In 1835, while at Providence, Louisiana, he enlisted in a Captain Daggett's company of volunteers and marched to Washington-on-the-Brazos to aid Texas in her fight for freedom. Daggett disbanded the company upon learning Texas had not yet declared her independence and returned to Louisiana, leaving behind several members of the old company, among them Steele. He enlisted in the Texas army and became a private in James Gillespie's Second Regiment, Texas Volunteers. Steele fought in the battle of San Jacinto and was wounded, but recalled later "men went into the fight determined to whip the Mexicans or die."²¹ On September 28, 1838, he married Mary Ann Powell whose father was among the first to locate land in the county. In 1844 Alfonso Steele and his family moved to the county and he lived here continuously for sixty-seven years. At the advanced age of ninety-four, on July 8, 1911, the last survivor of the Battle of San Jacinto died.²²

Adequate transportation facilities became an important asset to the county. Springfield Road which, perhaps, took its name from the county seat, was the main road of travel from Houston to North Texas. Prospective settlers and travellers used this road, and much of the hauling required by the early settlers was done over it. Within a short time other roads were surveyed and built. An excellent road connected Springfield with Fairfield and Palestine,²³ and the first commissioner's court of McLennan County ordered a road from Waco to Springfield.²⁴ With such a network of roads, Tilman Wolverton started a stage line, carrying mail and passengers to Washington and returning.²⁵

²⁰The name is also spelled Alphonso.

²¹*The Southland*, March, 1892, 26.

²²*Biography of Private Alfonso Steele* contains a detailed sketch of his life. *Handbook of Texas*, II, 665, contains a brief sketch.

²³J. DeCordova, *Texas: Her Resources and her Public Men*, 199.

²⁴*Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World or a Memorial and Biographical History of McLennan, Falls, Bell, and Coryell Counties, Texas*, 104.

²⁵*Groesbeck Journal*, May 15, 1936.

Davis McGee Prendergast, a native of Bedford County, Tennessee, attended Cumberland College and graduated from East Tennessee University. He migrated to Robertson County and began reading law, being admitted to the bar before Judge Robert E. B. Baylor. Settling at Springfield at an early date, D. M. Prendergast became one of the outstanding lawyers of the State. Widely known for his strong, unwavering convictions and untiring efforts to see fairness done to all, he commanded the respect of the people.²⁶ His son, Albert Collins Prendergast, became Chief Justice of the Court of Criminal Appeals. His brother, Luther Baker Prendergast, was never as prominent, being much older, but he served the county in several capacities.²⁷

The town was first visited by traveling peddlers. John R. Henry, after trading with Indians and Robertson County settlers for ten years, arrived in his heavily laden wagon with the intention of supplying the people's needs and returning to the Trinity River. He became enthralled in the potentialities of the town and decided to settle permanently. Choosing a lot near the spring, he built a small cabin and opened a mercantile store, becoming the first permanent merchant.²⁸

A United States post office was established sometime during 1846. Edward T. Jackson was appointed the first postmaster but declined the nomination. On January 29, 1847, Pleasant Smith was appointed, accepted, and became the first active postmaster.²⁹ An early mail route including Springfield was number 6143, from Franklin (via Springfield and Shelton) to Chamber's Creek, let on May 10, 1847, to J. B. Callicatte of Boonville, 75 miles and back, once a week for \$700 per annum.³⁰

²⁶*Mexia Weekly Herald*, March 10, 1910.

²⁷*Mexia Ledger*, December 15, 1882.

²⁸*Memorial History*, 653.

²⁹Other postmasters and date of appointments are:

John Shaw	August 26, 1850
Henry Tiebout	January 21, 1852
William W. Oliver	July 16, 1853
Solomon K. Scruggs	April 26, 1855
Hinton C. Smith	January 24, 1856
Thomas A. Turner	March 23, 1859
J. W. Cowden	March 20, 1860
Franklin Tidwell	August 6, 1860
David Johnson	May 18, 1866
Max H. London	November 7, 1867
William B. Davis	July 23, 1869
Miss Dessie Houston	May 9, 1870
Whitfield J. Bonner	June 19, 1872
John Miller	November 26, 1872
Miss Jane Phifer	October 19, 1875
Discontinued	December 9, 1878

³⁰Some other early mail routes in Limestone County are:

#6265 from Buffalo to Tehuacana, let to Tilman Wolverton on May 6, 1850,

By 1848, Springfield had approximately 120 inhabitants and was known as an ideal place to settle. Organization of a city government began March 1, 1848, by a legislative act incorporating the town:

Section 1. Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas, That the citizens of the town of Springfield in Limestone County be, and they are hereby declared a body corporate and politic, under the name and style of the corporation of the town of Springfield, who shall have the power of suing and being sued, pleading and being impleaded, and to hold and dispose of property, both real and personal, within the limits of said corporation.

Sec. 2. Be it further enacted, That all that tract of land (containing five hundred acres,) heretofore surveyed by A. McNeill, and known as the town tract shall be the limits and boundaries of said town.

Sec. 3. Be it further enacted, That it shall be the duty of the Chief Justice of the county, to order an election to be held, as early as practicable after the passage of this act, upon giving ten days notice thereof, for the election of one mayor and six aldermen, a collector or constable, a treasurer, and secretary, who shall hold their offices for the term of one year from the time of their election. In case of a vacancy occurs, by death, resignation or otherwise, the vacancy for the unexpired term shall be filled by new elections as follows: in case of vacancy in the board of aldermen, collector, treasurer, or secretary, then the election shall be conducted by the mayor. All persons residing within the corporation shall be entitled to a vote for the above named officers, who are eligible to vote for members of the Legislature.

Sec. 4. Be it further enacted, That the mayor and two-thirds of the board of aldermen shall constitute a board to transact business.

Sec. 5. Be it further enacted, That the collector, treasurer, and secretary, shall give bond in such sum, and with such securities, as shall be approved by the mayor and board of aldermen, and that all officers elected by virtue of this act,

64 miles and back, once a week for \$500 per annum.

#6268 from Franklin to Chamber's Creek, let to M. A. Mitchell, Tilman Wolverton, J. S. Dougherty, and Alex Douglass, on May 22, 1850, 91 miles and back.

#6273 from Leona to Springfield, let to Thomas W. Blake, on May 6, 1850, 60 miles and back, once a week for \$340 per annum.

#6339 from Springfield to Palestine, let to Bateman and McDonald, on October 16, 1851, 70 miles and back, once a week for \$574 per annum.

before entering upon the duties of their office, shall take and subscribe an oath, for the faithful discharge of the duties of their respective offices.

Sec. 6. Be it further enacted, That it shall be the duty of the mayor to cause an election to be held annually, at least ten days before the expiration of his term of office for all the officers mentioned in the third section of this act, who shall enter upon the duties of their offices respectively upon the expiration of the term of their predecessors.

Sec. 7. Be it further enacted, That the mayor shall have jurisdiction and exercise the powers of a justice of the peace, over all offences committed against the ordinances and decrees of the mayor and aldermen within the limits of the corporation.

Sec. 8. Be it further enacted, That the mayor and aldermen shall have power to pass such ordinances and decrees as they may think necessary, for the establishing schools and support of education, for the regulating of the police and preservation of order; to prescribe penalties; to levy taxes for the removal of nuisances; keeping the streets in order, and such other purposes as the board may deem necessary and proper, within the corporate limits of said town: *Provided*, such ordinances and decrees, shall not conflict with the laws and Constitution of this State.

Sec. 9. Be it further enacted, That this act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.³¹

Incorporation was probably done for school purposes as a school was established in the courthouse.

Four years after organization, the first census showed a total population of 2,608 of which 618 were Negro slaves, 882 white females, and 1,108 white males.³² Statistically, tabulations are incorrect as census enumerators became careless in performance of their duties. Pages became scrambled, and as a result, not only incorrect numbers were placed beside the heads of each family but each precinct lost its identity.

During 1849-1850, an English company, the Universal Emigration and Colonization Company, attempted to colonize 27,000 acres of land in the Milam Land District. William E. Hewitt of Birmingham, England, a physician and mechanic, was allotted forty acres in this grant. He and his wife, Hannah Diggory, migrated to Texas, arriving at Houston early in 1851. Hearing "such wonderful stories" of

³¹Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, III, 366-367.

³²J. D. B. DeBow, *Statistical View of the United States*, 314. Census Schedules of Limestone County, Texas, for 1850.

Central Texas, he transferred his land warrant claim for a similar quantity of land on Kimbell's Bend. From their arrival, they were dissatisfied with the colony and moved to an area north of Springfield. Several other families left the colony and settled in the same vicinity. Because these families were of English descent, the area became known as English Colony.

Townsend Bennett, a native of Franklin County, Tennessee, arrived at Springfield the latter part of 1849 and purchased acreage north of the town from George W. Cox where he built a race track which all fine horses could use. Bennett, a fancier of fine horses, became widely known for his fast horses. One day, a traveller rode into the town with several fine horses and wagered one thousand dollars with Bennett that his horses could beat any of his. Calling the bet, time for the race was set for the next afternoon. An unexpected rain storm drenched the track. Bennett became worried over the condition of the track. He knew that it would be impossible for his horses to win because they were not mudders. Finally, some one suggested drying the track by burning cedar railings. As there was no other alternative, the suggestion was followed which proved advantageous to Bennett.

Establishment of the race track caused many religious conflicts among the citizens of the area. Zacharia Morrell, Baptist missionary, considered Springfield as the head-centre of gamblers and professional racers, desperate men with the blood of their fellowman upon their hands. During the racing season, hundreds of horse enthusiasts came to watch the various races. On one occasion, Morrell was to administer the ordinance of baptism, and the racing season was to begin the next day. The gamblers attended the baptismal service in the river and retired to the grog shops for refreshments. Morrell walked slowly from the river to the church, trying to decide on an appropriate subject for the gamblers who might attend. As he passed the grog shops, gamblers began to follow, affording some gratification. Following preliminary activities, he announced the text of his sermon: the Christians flight along the race track of life. Searching deeply into his past life to remember his own days around the race tracks, Morrell delivered the greatest sermon in his long career. Though feeling such a sermon was wrong, he could never justify for preaching on such a subject . . . a subject he knew all too well.

This sermon must have led many sportsmen into reforming. Years later, one of the reformed racers—an owner of a big, white horse—approached Morrell, reminded him of the sermon, and assured him he had bet on the *white horse* of the gospel. "God gave me no rest till peace was given by faith in Christ," the reformed racer remarked.³³

³³For the complete sermon preached at Springfield, see Morrell, *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness*, 241-254. Morrell is confused on his dates; instead of 1846 the year should be 1849, for that is the year Townsend Bennett arrived in the county and built the race track. George W. Cox to Townsend Bennett, Deed dated November 19, 1849.

D. Port Smythe, a botanist, visited Springfield on his expedition from Centreville to North Texas and found the village much smaller than he had expected but with evidence of improvements. The freshly-painted buildings looked new and there were several in the process of being built. The business area was situated on a sloping hill, cut up by gullies, impairing its beauty and preventing a compactness and regularity. Even Smythe asserted that he could not do justice to the spring around which the town was built. At this time there were five stores, two hotels, two groceries, blacksmith shops, a tailor shop, two schools, and a Masonic hall. These businesses were operated by the following:

W. W. Oliver—general mercantile
J. R. Henry—general mercantile
George W. Johnson—general mercantile
Tiebout and Kellogg—general mercantile
 Henry Tiebout, clerk
Goldman and Waters—general mercantile
James W. Moore—tavern keeper
William Townsend—tavern keeper
Mark and W. L. King—grocery
D. M. and A. M. Hudson—grocery
Jarrard Brothers—blacksmith
William Long—blacksmith
Joseph Elander and G. W. Walker—tailors
R. W. Swaim—carpenter
William Cox—carpenter
H. H. Herendon—carpenter
Edward Jackson—gunsmith
Nicholas Daugherty—wagon maker
N. W. Grant—teacher
R. R. Smith—physician
Jackson L. Crabb—physician and Methodist preacher
Wilds K. Cooke—physician
William P. Dossey—Baptist preacher
Mordecai Yell—Methodist preacher
Reuben Long—Methodist preacher and physician
J. P. Philpott—surveyor
D. M. Prendergast—attorney-at-law
Thomas V. Mortimor—attorney-at-law
J. D. McCutcheon—attorney-at-law

There were, of course, some omissions in this first "directory." Thomas W. Archibald who lived east of Springfield was a well-known artesian well-digger. Joseph Booth Tyus and Benjamin R. Tyus who had migrated to the county in the forties were among the first surveyors. There were several freighters, among them being John Cox, John Ward, and Parley Green.

The Masonic Hall was only recently completed when Smythe visited the town. Springfield Masonic Lodge 74 had been set to work by dispensation organizing them a year earlier than its charter, which was approved on January 24, 1851. Charter members were Mordecai Yell, George Watts Walker, James M. Davis, Henry Tiebout, Davis McGee Prendergast, Laird B. Boyd, George Haynie, Ervin A. McGee, Joseph R. Brown, and Edward T. Jackson. By special agreement, the first story was leased to the Baptist Church. In 1872, the lodge was moved to Mexia and is still functioning as the oldest fraternal organization in the county.³⁴

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Following the Masonic Lodge, the Independent Order of Odd-Fellows organized Ashland Lodge 46. Records of this lodge were burned and little is known of its history. Among its members were Solomon K. Scruggs, George W. Johnson, W. W. Oliver, D. L. Burrows, Lewis Brash, John Bruce Vallandingham, Thomas A. Turner, J. J. Cullison and Robert McElroy. Earliest records in the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge, I.O.O.F., indicate the lodge was rather small, reporting a membership of only eighteen in 1855.³⁵

A newspaper known as the *Pioneer, Texas Pioneer*, and Springfield *Pioneer* made its appearance in the fifties. Proprietors and editors were J. L. Caldwell and W. L. Moody. The paper was a single sheet of two pages, published weekly, carrying items of local, state, and national interest. Caldwell and Moody owned the paper at Fairfield, and there is a possibility that both were published together. "Fairfield Yancey" Moody was a strong advocate of secession and raised a company for the Confederacy. The paper at Springfield ceased publication in 1860, and Caldwell moved to Fairfield to devote all his time to *The Texas Pioneer*. There are no known copies of the Springfield paper in existence which accounts for few facts about the town.

In 1852, Joseph Booth Tyus, a surveyor, established his home at Springfield. Born in Virginia, reared in Tennessee, Joseph B. Tyus and his twin brother, Benjamin R., migrated to Texas late in the forties and began work as surveyors, a profession which they followed for ten years. As the State was offering one-half of all land located, the Tyus twins became owners of large blocks of property. One block, where the present town of Mart is situated, was traded by the brothers for a stock of merchandise. Captain J. B. Tyus, as he was affectionately known, became an honored and influential man in Springfield and the county. His old home is the only structure remaining at Springfield to remind people of yesteryears. All other buildings were razed or moved.

Trading was done by exchange, as may be evidenced by records of

³⁴Petition for the Creation of Springfield Masonic Lodge, in the Grand Lodge Library, A.F. & A.M., Waco, Texas.

³⁵Proceedings of R. W. Grand Lodge of I.O.O.F. of the State of Texas, 1838-1861, 448, 470-471.

purchases from W. W. Oliver's and Brash and Simon's stores. Money had no particular value. Prices were exceedingly low, a pair of shoes selling for \$1.75, 8 yards of calico for \$2.00, and other items much less.³⁶ A cow and calf was legal tender for \$10.00 and in many instances, there are examples of persons paying for fifty acres of land or more with five cows and calves. It was rather common to hear that cows and calves were ten dollar bills and chickens and hogs were the change. Money in circulation was usually held by John R. Henry, "the unofficial banker" and wealthiest man in the county.

Occupations of the populace in 1860 included those of druggist, doctor, hotel keeper, master mason, tax collector, professor of languages, teacher of music, and stock raisers. W. W. Oliver, farmer and merchant, valued his real estate at \$68,000, an outstanding amount for that day. Thomas A. Turner, master saddler and ex-postmaster, made recordings of climatic conditions for the Smithsonian Institution.³⁷

Springfield continued to grow and develop as Adelaide Matilda Hammeken through her attorney and brother, Henry Antonio Mexia, sold small tracts of land to early settlers. Fortunately, the land which she acquired was located in the prairies and wooded sections of the county. The blackland prairies were not settled until a later date because the soil was thought to be unfertile and, foremost, the land was covered with "chiggers" which caused a constant irritation.

At first the railroad created little interest in the county seat. In the sixties a preliminary survey of the county was made and tentative route made. Later, the railroad right-of-way agent arrived in Springfield to purchase the necessary land. Property owners gathered in groups and discussed the situation. A majority were so enthused over prospects of a railroad traversing the county that many donated the necessary right-of-way. Little opposition was encountered at this time.

After the agent had gone, several influential men realized they would gain nothing. Trying vainly to keep their prestige, they began a vitriolic attack against the railroad, worked the would-be "donors" into a frenzy by telling them lurid tales. Some men offered enormous sums of money for the land, many times actual value. Owners refused to sell. Not to be outdone these influential men told owners their land was very valuable, worth a high price, and railroads had to pay the price. Fearing they would lose control of Springfield, legislation was enacted again incorporating the town.³⁸

Agitation was slowly rising for removal of the courthouse to a more centrally located place. Petitions were circulated but produced little action. A majority opposed appropriating funds to build any county buildings at Springfield, especially after the town was working against

³⁶Bills from stores, MSS in Limestone Collection.

³⁷Meteorological Report for the Smithsonian Institution from Springfield, Texas, June, 1859," MSS in Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C.

³⁸Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, VI, 739.

the railroad. By now, influential men had "brain-washed" land-owners to believing their land was very valuable. Land values began to loom large in their minds. Surely, they thought, the railroad could pay. The railroad had to pass through Springfield, they argued, for there was no other route for it to take.

Letters were sent to the railroad officials advising them the land which had been donated would now cost them something. Company officials replied by asking property owners to set a fair and equitable price as they would be willing to pay a reasonable amount. Land became very costly and many property owners asked exorbitant prices.

Exasperated with the Springfield people, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad secured right-of-way three miles east of the town, by-passing completely the county-seat. People began to see their failure to co-operate with the railroad meant doom to the town. Destruction of the courthouses by fire on June 19 and October 24, 1873, was the final blow. An election was ordered to relocate the county seat, and in December the county archives were moved to Groesbeck.

Springfield began to fade from the map. Irked by the attitude of the so-called influential men, people began to carry away the wooden buildings, plank by plank. The only ante-bellum city in the county, Springfield, became a memory.

TEHUACANA

Signing of the Indian treaty in 1844 opened land formerly owned by the Tehuacana Indians in the hills, springs, and creek to which they gave their name for settlement. First person to take advantage of this opportunity was John Boyd who visited the area previously. He was impressed with the area and in October, 1845, settled on his claim which embraced the larger part of the land lying around this picturesque and historic spot. John Boyd was born near Nashville, Tennessee, on August 7, 1796, was reared in Kentucky, and after his marriage to Elizabeth Davidson, migrated to Texas, arriving in the fall of 1835. Settling in Sabine County, he enlisted in the Texas army and participated in the battle of San Jacinto. Establishment of the Republic of Texas, saw him represent Sabine County in the first Congress. No man expended as much time, labor, and money to improve a town as did John Boyd. In 1849, Boyd bid to make Tehuacana the capital of Texas, and published a small pamphlet describing the many advantages to be received from this area. His bid was unsuccessful. In 1850, by popular vote, Austin was chosen the capital for twenty years.³⁹ Disheartened by this defeat, he became more determined to

³⁹Homer S. Thrall, *A Pictorial History of Texas*, 306, lists places voted for as: Austin, 7,674; Palestine, 1,854; Tehuacana, 1,143; and some scattering. An old folk legend is that Tehuacana missed being the capital by three votes. This, however, is not true.

interest some group in his town. Finally, he succeeded by persuading the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to establish Trinity University at Tehuacana.

Another early settler was James M. Love. Born and reared in Williamson County, Tennessee, he migrated to Texas and settled at Franklin. In 1848, Love moved to Tehuacana and opened a blacksmith shop, one of the earliest business establishments in the area. A son, Robert Marshall Love, became Comptroller of Public Accounts; but, according to Love, a significant event in his life occurred in 1873 when Edmund J. Davis contested the election of Richard Coke, and issued orders trying to prevent the fourteenth Legislature from convening. Armed with pistols, Robert Marshall Love and his brother, John, stood on the stairway in the capitol and protected the legislators, enabling them to organize and administer the oath of office to Coke.

A post office was established in 1847 with the name of Tewakony (sic) Springs. John Boyd was appointed postmaster. In 1869, the Post Office Department re-established a post office and changed the name to Tewakana (sic). Trinity University preferred using the name Tehuacana Hills and included that name on its seal. Therefore, the three names—Tehuacana Springs Tehuacana Hills, and Tehuacana—apply to the same town.⁴⁰

Perhaps, most famous of Tehuacana's early settlers were the Yoakum brothers. Franklin L., Henderson, and Madison Yoakum were born and reared in Yoakum's Valley in Tennessee and migrated to Texas in the early forties. Franklin L. and Madison settled in the county; Henderson settled at Huntsville. Franklin L. was one of the first physicians at Tehuacana, a minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and President of Tehuacana College. While a resident at Tehuacana, a son, Benjamin Franklin Yoakum, was born.

Benjamin Franklin Yoakum was born on August 20, 1859. His father wanted him to be a minister but he became a railroad man. Starting as a chain-bearer and rodman in a surveying party, he

⁴⁰Postmasters at Tewakony (sic) Springs from 1847 to 1866 were:

John Boyd	March 8, 1847
Laird B. Boyd	February 18, 1854
John Boyd	August 18, 1855
Sylvester I. Foster	January 11, 1858
Henry C. Lewis	November 19, 1857
N. D. Aycock	February 18, 1858
Horace A. Boyd	March 26, 1858
Leroy M. Peevy	October 24, 1858
Discontinued	November 27, 1860
Re-established	December 19, 1860
John Boyd	December 19, 1860
Discontinued	November 5, 1866

Re-established as Tewakana (sic) on October 8, 1869.

Matthew Honeycutt became first postmaster under the new name.

progressed slowly through the ranks as a boss of a surveying party, boomer and immigration agent, traffic manager, and finally, President of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad. Moving to New York in 1907, he became president of Empire Bond and Mortgage Co.

Tehuacana was selected as the site of Trinity University in 1869, and most of her history has been centered around various educational institutions which have been located in the area. After Trinity University was moved to Waxahachie in 1902, the property was deeded to the Methodist Protestant Church and became the site of Westminster College. Unification of the Methodist Protestant and Methodist Episcopal bodies brought Westminster under new control, and in 1942 the property was given to Southwestern University which closed the school eight years later. In 1953, Southwestern University sold the property to the Congregational Methodist Church which established the Westminster College and Bible Institute.

Incorporation was attempted in 1879 when a petition was presented to the County Judge requesting an election to decide the issue of corporation. At this time, the petitioners suggested a four square mile town with the Trinity University Building being the common center. A. Barry was appointed presiding officer, and the election must have failed for another petition bearing the names of twenty qualified voters was presented to the judge in 1890 requesting another election. Madison Yoakum was appointed presiding officer of this election held on November 12, 1890, and he reported all forty-three voters approving unanimously the corporation. Two weeks later, a mayor, marshall, and five aldermen were elected.

In 1903, construction of the Cleburne-Mexia line by the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railroad brought railroad service to Tehuacana. On May 10, 1942, the company abandoned its line from Hubbard to Mexia, which resulted in the closing of the Tehuacana station.

Many quaint and interesting stories linger about the town. Some of the old homes with ivy on the chimneys are still standing. The site of Tehuacana College, the old Trinity University building site, the hillside where the Tehuacanas and Cherokees had their fight, and the old spring are unmarked but the older citizens still point to various historic spots. Though much of its former glory has been lost, according to the Census of 1950, Tehuacana had a population of 389. It is the oldest town in the county and the only one that can trace its history to the pre-Civil War days.⁴¹

PERSONVILLE

Personville, a small settlement in southeastern Limestone County was founded in 1854 by B. D. Person, a native of North Carolina. Reared in Shelby County, Tennessee, he migrated to Shelby County,

⁴¹The early records of Tehuacana's Council were destroyed by fire several years ago.

Texas, and in 1851 moved to Pisgah in Navarro County and three years later to southeastern Limestone County.

A post office was established in 1855, and William Person was appointed postmaster.⁴² An old settler recorded at this time there were only two families living there and the town had a blacksmith shop, a "dram" shop, and a few neighbors. Two years later, the same old settler said that Personville contained six or eight residences, three dry goods stores, two groceries, a blacksmith, a ten pin alley and a cotton gin.

A great deal of confusion was evidenced in the early years over the name. Some preferred to call the community Personville while others insisted on calling it Lost Prairie. As a result, there has always been a great deal of overlapping.

One of the more prominent merchants at Personville was John Frank Boyd. Born near Lafayette, Alabama, on March 29, 1858, he and his sister, Permelia, moved to Georgia to live with relatives following the death of his parents. Graduating from Gainsville College, he taught in college for a short time before moving to Limestone County where he continued in the teaching profession for two years. During the early part of 1882, Boyd entered the mercantile business at Personville, establishing the Boyd Drug and General Merchandise Co. He was, unofficially, the undertaker for the area, too. After twenty years in business at Personville, the family moved to Mart in 1903, and Boyd engaged in cotton buying and the real-estate business prior to his death which occurred at Mart on February 13, 1942.⁴³

Another merchant was R. P. Merrill who opened a dry goods store in the early eighties. He, too, carried a good line and usually boasted of having a \$4,000 stock, which, at that time, was rather large. With the establishment of Coolidge in 1903, the family moved to the new location where Merrill continued in the merchandising business.

When the Nelleva cut-off on the Houston and Texas Central Railroad was built in 1906, Personville became a stop on this line. The railroad

⁴²Postmasters at Personville and the date of appointment are:

William Person	September 24, 1855
James E. Pollock	January 1, 1860
S. A. Wells	August 23, 1860
Thomas B. Rankin	August 9, 1866
Mrs. Amelia George	November 22, 1867
Green Lewis	August 11, 1870
William Hamilton	December 23, 1870
Robert B. McAlpin	April 22, 1873
James H. Reeves	April 20, 1874
J. C. Baldwin	August 16, 1875
Thomas B. Pounds	January 23, 1879
John Frank Boyd	January 12, 1885

⁴³Letters from Blanche Boyd, Mart, Texas, to R.A.W., 1953.

company started losing money on the cut-off, and was forced to abandon and scrap it. State Highway 39 was built on cut-off bed.

Through the years, Personville has slowly faded from the maps. Agricultural restraints and war economy helped hasten its complete abandonment, and today all traces of the former settlement have vanished.

LOST PRAIRIE

Synonymous with Personville was the founding of Lost Prairie. It is most difficult to separate the two communities as they are within a few miles of each other. Many stories have been told of the origin of the name. According to one old story, an unknown traveler inquired as to his location and received the reply, "Man, I'm lost on this here prairie." A few people contend it was named for a small prairie in the timber region. No one knows for sure, how the area received its name.

First settlers at Lost Prairie were James C. and Ammarena Pelton Wayland, natives of Arkansas. Shortly after their marriage, they moved to Texas and lived in Walker County before moving in 1853 to Limestone County. Described as a man of strong determination and constitution, he was a sufferer of rheumatism and could get about only on a pony. In this way he cut timber for his cabin which took longer than usual to build; during this time his health improved. Being a mechanic, he built a shop where all kinds of carpenter's work was done. Later, Wayland established a mercantile store and continued in the cattle business. At the time of his death on January 27, 1875, he was among the wealthiest men in the area.

Benson Galbreath came to Texas in the early fifties and began looking for a location, finally choosing Lost Prairie. At the time, he recalled a bald prairie, mesquite grass being high enough almost to hide a man on horseback. Adeline, it is reported, stood in the doorway of her house one morning and counted eighteen buffalo as they ran past. The Galbreath family recorded:

Houston was the nearest town of any size, being 175 miles away. The settlers made semi-annual trips for supplies. One fall Benson Galbreath and some of the neighbors started late to market, and after they were several days out on the road a severe freeze came up. They camped out at night and the next morning upon arising found all the oxen except one frozen to death.⁴⁴

One of the most thrilling experiences, yet most dreadful, were prairie fires which swept through this section in the fall. All grass would be lost, and would burn until it reached a large creek or river. Burning for several days, everything in the path was swept away.

⁴⁴Letter from Wretha Benson Johnson to R.A.W., 1959. The above article spells the surname Galbreath. Often, the spelling is found to be Galbraith.

Soon after their arrival in Texas, Adeline Morris Galbreath founded a fashionable boarding school at Lost Prairie, the earliest school in that area.

The early history of Lost Prairie is centered around the Baptist Church which was organized in the summer of 1853 as the Lake Creek Church. First meeting on Luther Wright's farm, the church moved to Jeremiah Lauderdale's schoolhouse, and finally to land donated by Eli Faulkenberry. It was not until December 1864 that the name Lake Creek was changed to Lost Prairie. Still active, Lost Prairie Baptist Church is the oldest church in the county.

Several families settled at Lost Prairie in the fifties, among them being Dr. James Harvey and Nan Reeves who organized the first Sunday school, Thomas Hendrix and Champness Beaver who built the first gin in that section, A. J. Rogers, Wiley Sims, and Joshua Chapman. Business people included S. H. Mills, merchant; Berry Rankin, grocer; Obediah Justice, wheelwright; S. Sorrelle, pealer; G. M. L. Sorrelle, attorney; Gibson Huff, blacksmith; Thomas Grooves, wagon maker; N. C. Wynekoop, physician; J. M. and J. Y. Aycock, clerks; and three teachers: E. J. Whitt, B. F. Whitt, and A. Baldwin.

In 1861, Grayson Masonic Lodge was constituted with twenty charter members.⁴⁵ However, the lodge was short lived, being in existence only twenty-seven years. It demised in 1889.

Only evidence of this early settlement is the small white frame church and well-kept cemetery.

EUTAW

Eutaw, located two miles east of present day Kosse, was the most important town in southern Limestone County before the entry of the railroad.

Origin of the name has been somewhat of a mystery. According to one legend, an early settler had a wife named Eutaw and the town was named in her honor. Another legend is that many early settlers were from Greene County, Alabama, and the town was named to honor their former county-seat, Eutaw, Alabama.

One of the first families to locate in the area was Thomas Allen Polk, born in 1810 in South Carolina. After his marriage to Harriett Elizabeth Crockett, they moved to Tennessee, and decided to join their fortune with the Republic of Texas. Selling all but seven slaves before leaving Tennessee, they used the money to purchase cattle and

⁴⁵Charter members of Grayson Masonic Lodge were J. B. Kilborn, J. W. Yerby, N. B. Greer, W. L. Nichols, S. N. Hasty, T. H. Beaver, W. Curry, O. W. Burleson, Joseph J. M. Forman, W. E. Adams, F. B. Bond, J. W. Tacker, R. S. Houston, Thomas Sansom, J. J. Heflin, R. C. Johnson, A. J. Oaks, Z. T. Morton, W. R. Beene and W. H. Miller. "Petition for the Creation of Grayson Lodge" in the Grand Lodge Library, Waco, Texas.

land. Thomas A. Polk died in 1855 and was one of the first persons to be buried in the Eutaw cemetery.⁴⁶

Harriett Elizabeth Polk continued to live in the double log cabin on the hill and reared her family of five girls. Her home was on the Springfield Road, and for a time was the stopping point for stage coaches. She served meals and often gave lodgings to travelers. Her nearest neighbors were George Gentry⁴⁷ and Charles Welch.

Anson F. Moss settled in the Eutaw area in the forties, probably 1845. His first wife died in April of 1847 and was buried in the corner of the yard at her request; this was the beginning of the Moss cemetery.⁴⁸ A few years later Moss built a new home near Moss Springs and lived there a few years. Laura Moss Boney recorded, "A. F. Moss moved to Erath County, lived there a few years, moved back home and finished his life here. He died September 14, 1888 and was buried beside his first wife. My father, John Whitfield Moss, was the only child by his first wife. He raised a large family by his second wife, two daughters and six sons."⁴⁹ The Moss family were among the most prominent in this section and helped establish the Fire Brick and Tile Co.

Arrival of Isaac Burleson was of major importance, for a son, Aaron James Burleson, recorded much history of the area. Born in Jackson County, Mississippi, on January 19, 1846, Aaron James Burleson, more affectionately known as Uncle Jimmy or James, settled at Eutaw in the early fifties and lived in the vicinity more than eighty years. Of the area at the time of their settlement, Burleson said, "Some families lived at what is now called Horn Hill, west of Groesbeck, and also some families lived at old Springfield but there were none living between here and there, a distance of eighteen miles. An old gentleman by the name of Head lived at Heads Prairie; and perhaps a few other families lived ten or twelve miles to the east of Eutaw. One old store was southwest several miles from the present site of Bremond."⁵⁰ Evidently, he enjoyed these years for there are repeated references to the good times in those days.

Another early settler in the area was Lot Leguin Godfrey, born in Oconee County, Georgia, on May 7, 1823. At the age of twenty-two he migrated to Limestone County; when the United States declared war against Mexico, he enlisted in Captain Sutton's company and participated in a number of engagements, including the capture of Monterey, Mexico. At the close of the war he returned to the county, married Emily Biggs, and began farming and stock-raising. Following the

⁴⁶Letter from Claude W. Bryant, a grandson of Thomas A. Polk, to R.A.W., July 16, 1952.

⁴⁷Gentry Creek was named in honor of George Gentry.

⁴⁸Statement of Laura Moss Boney.

⁴⁹"Laura Moss Boney's Recollections," MSS in Limestone County Collection.

⁵⁰Aaron James Burleson, "In the Long Ago," undated clipping.

death of his first wife, he married Nannie Roark and moved to Eutaw where he spent the rest of his life. An optimist and always looking on the bright side of everything, Godfrey was a friend to all and boasted proudly of never having an enemy. At the time of his death on January 6, 1916, Lot Leguin Godfrey was the last Mexican war veteran living in this section.⁵¹

Eutaw grew rapidly and soon boasted of having four general merchandising stores, two churches, a tavern, a school, blacksmith shop, and stage depot. Driving horses were changed at the stage depot as Eutaw was the terminal; at first, the stage line operated only a weekly coach and as traveling picked up, twice a week, and finally had to operate daily. It was considered a modern town as Professor Lud Williams operated a school of dancing.

Salem Baptist Church was organized in 1855 by Elder William Clark with six charter members: William and Elizabeth Clark, James and Elizabeth Tribble, and John and Alice Hodge. The Presbyterians and Methodists organized churches in the vicinity about the same time.

James E. Price settled at Eutaw in the fifties and often recalled proudly that he gave Sam Houston a drink of water during one of his campaign speeches at the town. Houston patronized the stage line that extended from Houston by way of Crockett, Eutaw, Alta Springs, Marlin, and Waco. In his travels through this area, he spoke from the steps of the Baptist church, and usually spent the night at the old Alta Springs Tavern which later became known as the Sam Houston Inn.

A post office was established at Eutaw on October 4, 1856, when Nathan Gilbert was appointed postmaster.⁵² Prior to this time the citizenry used post offices at Alta Springs or Falls of the Brazos.

W. W. Patrick moved to Limestone County in 1854, settling at Horn Hill. Two years later, he moved to Pillow's Point, one mile north of Kosse, and two years later bought 640 acres of land from Anson F. Moss. Prior to the Civil War, Patrick built his home one mile east of Eutaw and furnished it with typical frontier furniture. John Whitfield Moss married Matilda Elizabeth Patrick and moved to the Patrick home; in 1870 Patrick returned to Robertson County and deeded the house and property to his daughter. The Moss' family lived in the house until their deaths, and in turn the property became

⁵¹Kosse *Cyclone*, January 13, 1916.

⁵²Other postmasters at Eutaw and date of appointment were:

William H. Ferguson	May 5, 1857
John M. Ross	February 1, 1858
Augustus McDaniel	October 2, 1858
Jesse A. McKissack	December 5, 1859
Lewis Pearce	August 3, 1860
Isaac B. Ellison	November 26, 1866
George Broach	August 17, 1868
Routed to Kosse after October 17, 1870.	

the property of Laura Moss Boney who insisted that the old house be kept in the original condition. The Patrick-Moss home is still standing, one of the most historic spots in the county. An attempt to preserve the house is underway; every article of furniture is exactly as placed in the early days.

Ervin and Matilda Burdette Brown, both natives of Georgia, moved to the county in 1857 from Washington County, and settled at Pillow's Point. Elizabeth Francis Brown, their daughter, and her husband, Harrison Bryant, moved about the same time and bought land between the Polk and Brown holdings. This family has played an important role in the development of Texas. T. J. Brown was at one time the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Captain J. P. Brown was commander of a company of Limestone Volunteers in the Confederate Army, E. F. Brown was a prominent attorney in North Texas; and one daughter married Zacharia Morrell, the Baptist historian.

Nimrod Markham settled in the town in the fifties and opened a dry goods, grocery, and general merchandise business. One of his business rivals was Adolph Harris, later of Dallas.⁵³ They hauled their goods from Galveston in ox carts. As there were no banks or safes, an old family tradition is that N. Markham kept his money buried in the smoke house.⁵⁴ During the war, he was directed to remain at home and take care of the widows, orphans, and needy. After slaves gained their freedom, his Negroes refused to leave and were cared for by his children as long as they lived.⁵⁵ Markham moved his store to Kosse after the establishment of that town.

Eutaw was divided into lots, and an early record shows that Nathan Gilbert owned sixteen, McKissack and Baker owned eight, John Walling owned eight, J. H. Ferguson owned two, and J. W. McDaniel, A. H. and J. W. McDaniel, Eugene Morris, William Hudson, Henry Fox, and J. W. Brantley owned one each. Some of the early merchants were:

Nathan Gilbert—hotel keeper
Augustus McDaniel—merchant
Eugene Morris—blacksmith
J. A. McKissack—physician
H. A. Moore—blacksmith
James Fairbairn—dentist
Hudson Brothers—grocers
T. H. Burt—physician
Henry Fox—merchant
Lewis Pearce—grocer
Hiram Walker—Methodist clergyman
William Clark—Baptist clergyman
David Lynch—waggoner

⁵³Letter from Eva Markham Etheridge to R.A.W., April 3, 1952.

⁵⁴Letter from J. L. Markham, Jr. to R.A.W., April 23, 1953.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

Of the early business establishments, perhaps the best known was that of Henry Fox. Fox's nephew, Adolph Harris, moved to Eutaw in the fifties, and became associated with his uncle in the mercantile business. He must have attended school, for Aaron James Burleson was proud that he taught English to Harris. Fox and Harris moved to Houston and established a wholesale dry goods business, and later Harris moved to Dallas and founded A. Harris and Company, one of the leading department stores. Several old-timers who knew Harris often recalled him saying, "Yes, my first store in Texas was at Eutaw."⁵⁶

A Masonic lodge was instituted at Eutaw in the late fifties. On June 13, 1859, Eutaw Masonic Lodge 233 received its charter and at that time its membership included A. T. Daniel, Nathan Gilbert, A. H. McDaniel, B. F. Burns, John W. McDaniel, Ervin Brown, J. P. Brown, and Samuel B. McKnight. A lodge hall was built; the lodge was moved to Kosse after the founding of that town.

With the founding of Kosse, Eutaw dwindled as the business establishments and people moved to that booming railroad town.

OTHER PRE-WAR SETTLEMENTS

Horn Hill, originally called Mount Vernon, was a village located six miles northwest of Groesbeck on the highest elevation in that area. In the early fifties, it consisted of a merchandise store, owned and operated by James J. Lewis. A post office was established there in 1857.

Mount Calm was the first village in northwestern Limestone County; it was located six miles northwest of Prairie Hill. It appears that the town was built around a Baptist church; Ezekiel J. Billington organized Mount Antioch Church in 1855, shortly after his arrival. The first merchandise store was owned and operated by Hardy Jones. A post office was established there in 1858, and Jones became the first postmaster. An early directory of Mount Calm listed the following merchants:

- H. Clark—general store
- J. E. Cobb—groceries
- B. W. Pitts—groceries and drugs
- F. M. Pitts—drugs
- T. M. Pitts—flour mill
- William Sanderson—groceries and drugs

After the building of the Tyler-Waco line of the Cotton Belt, Mount Calm was relocated in Hill County. On August 20, 1883, a motion was made in the Commissioner's Court that Mount Calm be here-

⁵⁶Statements of older citizens and letters from Eva Markham Etheridge, J. L. Markham, Jr., and Recollections of A. J. Burleson.

after called Mount Antioch;⁵⁷ this action was prompted by an agreement between Hill and Limestone County as to the exact boundary between the two counties.

Steele Creek or Tidwell, three miles northwest of Thornton, was a village near the creek from which it derived its name. Among the earliest settlers were the Chism, Barron, Tidwell, Kilpatrick, and Hogan families. John Chism donated land for a cemetery and church, and the village built around the church. Two merchandise stores were established about 1855, owned and operated by Moses Belcher and Richard Eaton. A Methodist church was built about the same time and the elderly David J. Tidwell was appointed pastor; Tidwell was a firm believer in camp meetings and held one on the church grounds each year which gave rise to the name of Tidwell in honor of the preacher. Kennedy Thrasher was the first teacher. A post office was established in 1857, and David J. Tidwell was appointed postmaster.

Eaton, two miles southwest of Thornton, was named in honor of Silas Eaton who settled on Mill Creek about 1854. Eaton built a grist mill and people from all sections of the county brought their corn here to be ground into meal. A school was founded at an early date and J. H. Powell was among the first teachers.

Phifer Chapel, three miles southwest of Groesbeck, was named in honor of Forest Phifer who settled there in 1844.

Head's Prairie, ten miles southeast of Kosse, was named in honor of James A. Head who settled in the area at an early date, after serving as a ranger in the Texas army.

Lewisville, two miles west of Groesbeck, was a village prior to 1860 when James J. Lewis moved his general merchandise store to the area; the village was named in honor of this early day merchant. Other than a general merchandise store, J. C. Grammer operated a blacksmith shop. Mrs. Ila Dennis Welch recalled, "Thomas Hatcher Dennis and his family settled at Lewisville in the sixties. I was a little girl at the time. The village was divided into lots and blocks and there were saloons, stores, blacksmith shops, and grocery stores. It was a tough place. They had a school. The first one was in front of the Welch place and it was later built back of the Welch place. They had two teachers, and Mr. Floyd and his wife (Henry and Leonide Floyd) and about 400(?) pupils.⁵⁸ The village had two doctors at one time. One of these, Dr. Thomas Hatcher Dennis, brought the first hypodermic syring to the county. Dr. J. C. Welch is credited with bringing the first piano to this section.

Eli Davis Prairie, three miles northeast of Thornton, was named in honor of Eli Davis who settled the area in the forties.

Ferguson Prairie, fourteen miles southeast of Groesbeck and eleven

⁵⁷Commissioner's Court Minutes, C, 209.

⁵⁸Statement of Ila Dennis Welch.

miles southeast of Thornton, was named in honor of Joseph Ferguson who was the first to settle there.

Honest Ridge, nine miles southwest of Mexia, was settled in the early fifties by the Magee, Burney, Miller, Ward, and Wood families. It became an educational center after the Civil War.

Hog Range, six miles southeast of Groesbeck, was settled in 1857 by the McClellan, Rasco, Herod, and Hyden families. It was of minor importance until the area became densely populated following the war.

Sulphur Springs, often called Kennedy Springs, three miles west of Groesbeck, was a famous health resort in the early years.

CHAPTER V

Civil War and Reconstruction

Limestone County in 1861 faced the problem of remaining loyal to the Union or approving the doctrine of secession. Slavery, the economic institution of the South, had developed rapidly. In 1850, there were 618 slaves owned by 114 men; fifteen men owned more than half of all slaves in the county. Ten years later, there were 844 slaves valued at \$537,800.

Logan A. Stroud was the largest slave owner in the county, owning 156 Negroes prior to emancipation. The following narrative concerns Stroud's activities:

It is rather difficult for one to know both the given and surnames of all the slaves because only the given names are used on all documents. But, all these slaves lived at Pleasant Retreat.

Jane E. Stroud was a very religious woman and every Sunday would put on her best dress, sit on the porch and read her Bible. Her influence was felt on the slaves because as the Negro women worked in the garden a person would lecture to them on the moral ways of life.

An old slave named Aunt Bet worked in the kitchen. She was thought to be trustworthy. One day, Mrs. Stroud ordered her to pull up her apron and there she found that Aunt Bet was stealing sugar. Needless to say what happened. Aunt Mary assisted in the kitchen.

Logan Stroud was not cruel to his slaves. He and his daughter, Teresa, inspected the slave cabins twice a day. If any of the slaves seemed to be puny they were sent to the big house, fed and given medicine if they needed it. None of them ever wanted for medical attention for Wilds K. Cooke, Augustus Owen, Ruffian Lawson, or B. D. McKie, all medical doctors, were summoned to administer help to the slaves.

Each slave was permitted to have his own plot of ground where he could raise whatever he so desired. Also, they were permitted to prepare their own breakfast in their own houses in their own way. Supplies were given to them every Saturday. However, all of them wore white clothes.¹

Developments were carefully watched. Growing excitement of the impending crisis was felt intensely and some of the men returned immediately to their home states so they could enlist in local regiments. Of course, some were bitterly opposed to secession. James L. Burney, Chief Justice, certified that an election had been held and John Gregg, William Peck, D. M. Prendergast, and Charles Stewart were the duly elected delegates to the Secession Convention.²

Prominent men spoke at the numerous mass meetings held throughout the county. Davis M. Prendergast, John Gregg, and John Aycock were the most conspicuous leaders in this area. W. L. Moody, editor of *The Pioneer*, was, perhaps, the most active advocate of secession in this area and spoke in behalf of the Southern cause, convincing the people that the cause of the Confederacy was only right. After South Carolina seceded from the Union the people were even more excited and in the election following the county cast 525 votes for secession with only 9 against.

A company of Limestone men was organized at Springfield. Officers were Lochlin Johnson Farrar as captain, Wiley P. Brown as first lieutenant, and W. H. Woodward and F. L. Tidwell as second lieutenants. This company was disbanded because the men were anxious to get into the field. Farrar raised another company and again was elected captain. Other officers elected were: Wiley P. Brown as first lieutenant, Franklin L. Tidwell as second lieutenant, W. H. Woodward as second lieutenant, J. B. Tyus, J. E. Thornton, William Cleveland, and Erbin Sharp as sergeant; this company was mustered into the service at Camp Tarrant in Ellis County by Colonel William H. Parsons. Farrar wrote the following notation on the muster roll:

I have the skeleton of a company in the service of the state of Texas from the date of mustering in (August 23, 1861), until the 8th day of October A.D. 1861, when Captain Kyser's company took the place mine held in the Regiment on the date last mentioned, and I then fin (sic) set opposite my name under the head of "period served" one month and fifteen days, as also opposite the names of the Lieutenants; after the 8th of Oct. '61 I was duly appointed Sergeant Major, and was not mustered out of the Service until I arrived at

¹"Some Data on Limestone Families," MSS in Limestone Collection.

²Ernest William Winkler (Editor), *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas, 1861*, 430.

Hempstead, Austin County, a distance of 150 miles from the place of enrollment.³

A company known as the Eutaw Blues was organized at Eutaw. It was mustered into service at Camp Beauregard with Anson F. Moss as captain and A. H. McDaniel, J. R. Adams, and J. P. Brown as lieutenants. It became known as Company K of the Twelfth Texas Cavalry.

Another company was commissioned in 1861 with Green B. Duncan as captain and Richard Eaton, George T. Davis, and W. S. Cobb as lieutenants. It was assigned to the Second Brigade. J. L. Billington, Hardy Jones, D. M. Prendergast, William J. Rasco, R. C. Robison, and H. H. Stevenson are credited with raising companies. Several men organized independent groups and traveled to Houston and other points to enlist in companies. Some were conscripted to stay at home and perform special tasks; A. M. Veal became captain of the Home Guard, J. G. Wayland became miller at Springfield, and N. H. Jackson was to shoe horses for the Confederacy. It has been estimated that about three-fourths of the voting strength of the county served in the army.

Tom Burney, a Terry Ranger, wrote a lengthy letter of his experiences. Twenty men left Springfield on September 8, 1861, and arrived in Houston just in time to join the famous Terry's Rangers, Burney begins, and continues:

We were fortunate enough to strike a company from Gonzales County which was not as full as they wished and we joined it, which was Company C, commanded by M. L. Evans, Capt., A. D. Shannon, 1st, John Baylor, 2nd, and Jim Dunn, 3rd Lieutenants. I believe, as well as I can remember, there were 27 men in my squad. After we joined it, it made quite a good Company, numbering about 100 men. Well, we were sworn in for three years or during the war, and we were tied to stay whether we wanted to or not.

When we joined, our destination was Richmond, Va., but General Sidney Johnston asked the war department for us and we were sent to him at Bowling Green, Kentucky, where we spent a very hard winter, not being used to such a cold climate, it caused a great many to be sick and a good deal of fatal sickness among the Regiment a good many were discharged and others got furloughs and came home to regain their health. The Regiment left was sent to Green River to do picket duty for the army and were stationed about six miles each of the Mamoth Cave (sic), I think it was east. It was here that the boys had their first fight,

³Muster Roll, L. J. Farrar's Limestone Volunteers.

and it was a bad one, too. Our Col. was killed and five or six others, several were badly wounded. I was down with the measles at that time and was sent to the hospital in Nashville, but I ran away and left the car at Franklin, Ky. I believe we got to Corinth in January or February, I can't remember dates but we stayed here until April 13th and marched out to meet Gens. Grant and Halleck and the fight opened up April 6th, 1862, on Sunday morning before daylight and continued about 3 days.⁴

Irritated by reports about Shannon's Scouts, Burney wrote his daughter:

I was one of the original members of Hood's Scouts, a detail made from the Rangers of 1 man from each company, but Shannon worked the thing to suit himself. We had several from his own Company and nearly all of them were from the Limestone Squad which was very flattering to us. I don't know if I can remember all their names but I will mention all I can. George Archer, Dick Oliver, Bill Lynch, Felix Kennedy, Bill Owens, and Tom Burney, these men were of the Squad who left Springfield.

When Hood started to Tennessee, we were left near Atlanta to watch Shannon and keep back small parties who would come out on thieving expeditions and chase them in or capture them, but sometimes there would be too many for us 15 men to tackle and then we would stay pretty close around concealed by thick timber until we could see some stragglers whom we would gobble up pretty quick.⁵

Burney described the various engagements in which he participated and his letters are among the few ever located describing the county's participation in the war.

Much enthusiasm was witnessed at the beginning of hostilities. W. P. Lane's Rangers were greeted with the firing of anvils upon their arrival at Springfield and women organized sewing circles to make all kinds of clothing. To pay the county's expenses at this time, several thousand dollars worth of treasury warrants were issued. People gave every kind of assistance possible, such as:

I certify that I purchase the above mentioned (400 pounds) bacon of L. A. Stroud for eighty dollars and that the account is just and correct and the same has not been paid for.

M. McGee, Captain.⁶

⁴Tom Burney, *Experiences of Tom Burney*, pages not numbered.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Receipt in possession of Mary Wilson and Sarah McKenzie.

Many of the soldiers were either wounded or killed. One of the wounded soldiers sent the following poem to his relatives:

From the wounded young men of the Texas Brigade
To the Ladies that kindly have rendered them aid
The Fourth Texas wounded especially claims
Forever to honor and cherish their names.

The Warrenton ladies that our wounded have fed
That prayed for the living and wept o'er the dead
That decked the fresh grave with flowers anew
In short that did all that a sister could do.

To see the fair stranger as she wept o'er the grave
Of one that had died his country to save
Those eyes were not human that shed not a tear
When she whispered I saw his Mother was here.

We have never felt fear to meet bullets or steel
But the more that we dar, the more keenly we feel
The claims of true friends and grateful to those
Who kindly assisted in our woes.

The names of Miss Norris and Miss Nobbie Homes
There ware twenty nine Texians ne'er cease to honor
And three Jewish ladies I know not their names
On our memory and gratitude have not less claim.

Other maidens and matrons have called in each day
To smoothen our pillows and gladden our stay
Till we feel among kindred and true ones again
To part with such kindness will give us all pain.

When peace lovely peace to our nation shall come
On the bright plains of Texas we each have a home
Where a Mother or sister or wife now resides
And we from that day may be found by their sides.

Should chance change or fortune then cause you to roam
To that land of bright flowers will you call at our homes
And with able our loved loves ones we will welcome you there
And show you how grateful True Texans are.⁷

Surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Courthouse brought the return of the tired and weary soldiers to their devastated and ruined farms. Conditions were described by A. J. Burleson as "a sickening thing to see, but we had to brace up and face the situation as it was. There was sorrow on every hand, and all about us stalked the giant of poverty, hunger and disease. Our stock, our cattle had been scattered

⁷Original in possession of J. S. Powell, Thornton, Texas (1953).

to the winds—we knew not where to find them. However, we were so glad the struggle had ended, that we undertook our tasks in good humor and made the best of it.”⁸

Little did the people realize that the reconstruction period would be worse than the war. In September 1865 county officers were elected and it appeared the transition would be orderly. However, following the election of June 25, 1866, in which James L. Burney had been elected county judge, S. D. Walker as county clerk, and Milton A. Tucker as sheriff, confusion and trouble began. Burney and Walker were removed by special order and General Joseph Reynolds appointed the county officials; many elected officers failed to qualify. Establishment of a Freedmen’s Bureau in the area was to bring further havoc and hatred.

A reign of terror began on June 13, 1867, with the appointment of Charles E. Culver as agent for the Freedmen’s Bureau; he immediately assumed the title of General. Dictatorial prowess being his ambition he issued orders prohibiting any person from carrying firearms and decreed that all firearms in the county must be deposited with him or some member of his “gallant army.” Such orders antagonized the citizens and they refused to obey. People were treated harshly and even Union men agreed the white people were being punished too severely. Some persons contend the trouble began with the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation.

On Saturday morning, June 19, 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation was read on the Logan Stroud plantation. According to Negro eyewitnesses, there was jubilation everywhere expressed in the form of shouting, singing, or dancing. Older ex-Negro slaves such as Alfred Connor and Davey Medlock showed consternation and fear over the plight of the freed Negroes. Medlock made a pulpit, kneeled, and prayed for deliverance of these poor people; arising singing a hymn he began preaching to the small group that had congregated. The older people understood the situation and claimed in later years it saved them from destruction. However, the younger Negroes were led astray and were convinced they were now the masters; on the slightest provocation a Negro would call the so-called bureau which in turn would render a verdict.

At the same time, white eyewitnesses said there was sadness everywhere. The ex-slaves asked their former masters if they had to leave. While records for this period were destroyed, it appears from the few meager sources available that a number of the former owners gave small tracts of land to each slave family.

This was a troublesome period. Blanche McCain Rimassa’s vivid description reveals:

Our home was at Springfield, county site of Limestone at

⁸Aaron James Burleson, “In the Long Ago,” Kosse *Cyclone* clipping.

the time. My father was a doctor and he was halted every mile he rode after night. Both he and his black horse, Dick, were well known and while he had been a Captain in the Confederate Army, his devotion to the sick—the fact that he “never refused a ‘call,’ regardless of the hour, the distance, the financial condition of the patient, be he white or black,” was undisputable so he was always told to “ride on” after a few questions from the Negro guards, who were all recently freed slaves, and many beside themselves with a little petty, brief authority, but they never lost respect for “The Doctor” or perhaps it was his mission that appealed to them. At any rate he was never molested nor delayed.

There were many depredations in the neighborhood, rightfully or wrongly attributed to these Negro troops and there was anxiety felt and fear amongst and about the women and children. The men, remember were all unarmed, helpless, at the mercy of the powers that be. An idle word—a careless act might precipitate a catastrophe. The tension was acute.

Families merged for company and protection as they did a few years earlier when the Indians were prowling.

... Many law abiding upright citizens were arrested and even jailed on the most trivial or perhaps trumped up charges.

These were troublesome times. The kind that try men's souls.⁹

In November, 1867, Culver and an orderly were riding in the Rocky Crossing vicinity where they met William Patrick Stewart and his son, Tom, hunting lost yearlings. Stewart had a rifle and Culver, sighting the weapon, was antagonized to learn that people looked upon him and his bureau as “silly-follies.” The gun was ordered to be deposited immediately which was ignored. The Stewarts returned home, leaving Culver mortified by an “impudent white who didn’t even think enough of the South to fight for her during the war.”¹⁰ For some real or fancied cause, Stewart was summoned to appear before “His Lordship” and upon his failure to do so, orders were issued for Stewart’s arrest. Culver and an orderly named Moore delivered the decree. As they approached the house, Stewart walked to the door and stood in the entrance. When the two men arrived at the door they were ordered off the land. This infuriated Culver and he threatened to use force; Stewart seized his rifle and killed both men.

William Stewart hurried to Springfield to get Dr. S. F. Starley to

⁹Blanche McCain Rimassa, “Signs,” MSS in Limestone Collection.

¹⁰Letter from John Allison to John Stewart, date illegible. Also, Letter from John Allison to Walter L. Carley, February 24, 1944.

treat his wounds and to spread the alarm. Couriers rode into the neighboring communities to warn the people that serious trouble might take place. Culver's body, according to an old story, was brought to the courthouse and placed in a prominent place where all could see it. Negroes became excited and called for the revenge of Culver's death. George Pritchard who had camped near Cotton Gin, rode into Springfield and told the citizens of the excitement around the bureau's headquarters. Large numbers of Negroes assembled and laid seige to Springfield for several days, but the dispute was finally settled without any fighting. William started life anew in New Mexico and Tom, not wanting to leave Texas, assumed the name of Guthrie.

Conditions became particularly bad. Bands of Ku Klux Klan organized and traveled throughout the area. There was much feuding. In the ensuing elections several whites were elected to office but were promptly removed as one of the impediments of reconstruction. In the hassle of offices, Ralph Long, a Negro, was elected (?) as Representative from Limestone County.¹¹ Long, a native of Tennessee, was the youngest delegate, being twenty-five years of age.¹² He signed the protest which declared its omission of the *ad initio* doctrine and its extension of the right of suffrage to all those who voluntarily became the public enemy of the United States¹³ and, it was he who offered the resolution annulling certain court decisions which declared that the Emancipation Proclamation should not take universal effect.¹⁴ Though his resolution was rejected, he was an outstanding leader. Another Limestone Negro, Jiles Cotton, moved to Robertson County after the war and became the first Negro legislator from that county.¹⁵

Realizing that Abraham Lincoln, the "Great Emancipator," was a Republican and President of the United States during the Civil War, it is not surprising to find the Negroes casting their lots with the Republican party. In the ranks of the party quite a few Negroes in this section became political bosses. Ralph Long was the recognized boss of the Republican Party in this section during the period of reconstruction.¹⁶

The war decade is generally a period of loss in both population and wealth but Limestone found that decade to be the real beginning of her greatness. Within this ten-year period the county gained 4,054

¹¹J. Mason Brewer, *Negro Legislators of Texas and their Descendants*, 125.

¹²*Ibid.*, 115.

¹³Charles W. Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas*, 256.

¹⁴W. E. Burghardt, *Black Reconstruction*, 558.

¹⁵J. Mason Brewer, *op. cit.*, 59. Giles Cotton, also spelled Jiles Cotton, is recognized as the father of all the Cottons in Limestone and Robertson counties. He was described by those who knew him as being a giant, standing more than six feet, red-headed, and freckled. Many Negroes claim that because of his perfect physical makeup he was used as a "stud" on the larger plantations.

¹⁶*The Limestone New Era* (Groesbeck), July 29, 1896.

people, giving her a total population of 8,591 in 1870. An interesting sidelight with this period is the fact that during the elections of 1869 the county cast 369 votes for A. J. Hamilton and 257 for E. J. Davis, the man soon to become their arch enemy.

Political history was uneventful until 1871 when DeWitt Clinton Giddings, Democrat, opposed William Thomas Clark, Republican, for Congress. Davis had extraordinary power given him by law and an obedient police ready to execute his orders. In order to defeat the election of Giddings, it became necessary to create disturbances so that votes from strongly Democratic counties might be rejected. On September 15, 1871, circulars were distributed throughout the county urging each and every Democrat to register because evidence had been received that the Radical element were required to register at once. However, the county had given a majority to Davis' Democratic opponent so every obstacle possible was used by the State Police.

As a last resort trouble was brought about by a murder. On September 30, 1871, D. C. Applewhite and a group entered Clark's Saloon in the newly founded town of Groesbeck for a social drink. Mitch Cotton and three other colored policemen were in the saloon. Cotton approached Applewhite, supposedly, to reprimand him for his boisterousness; the Negro was asked if he was armed and at once some shots rang out, supposedly fired by the policemen. Applewhite ran from the saloon, crossed Navasota Street, and fell beside Waco Street. Though apparently dead, Cotton who was following, fired two more shots in Applewhite's body. Mayor Adolph Zadek, Jr., arrived and told the crowd, "I summons you all to help me arrest those men and to help me keep the peace."¹⁷ The statement was reiterated to another crowd a short time later. Citizens not only became alarmed over the incident but began to arm themselves as ordered by the mayor. In the meantime, the four policemen took refuge in the mayor's office. Barricading themselves inside, they not only threatened and defied the authorities but fired into the street. Reinforced by twenty additional policemen from Springfield, the combined group secured horses and rode out of town, threatening the people, uttering threats against the town, and firing their weapons as they fled.¹⁸

Citizens from other sections of the county began coming to Groesbeck for the Negroes were being reinforced and making known their intentions to return and burn the town. Mayor Zadek attempted to handle the situation in an orderly manner by appointing A. H. Steigall as marshal and instructing him to organize a special police force, a mounted force to pursue and arrest the guilty parties and another force to patrol the streets of Groesbeck. Finally, the sheriff arrived and secured warrants for the arrest of the murderers who were then

¹⁷"Memorial from the Citizens of Limestone County," MSS Texas State Archives.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

Read and Circulate !

Citizens! The hour has come when peace, order, society and good Government all demand that the intelligence and virtue of our people should come forward and actively aid us in obtaining a full Registration.

Undoubted testimony has been received that the Radical element will be required to Register AT ONCE, and that a scheme is on foot to immediately thereafter cause disturbance, so that there shall be grounds to close the books and thereby defeat a full registry of the Democracy, thus lessening our votes at the polls.

Let every Democrat Register, without a moment's unnecessary delay. The victory is within our grasp! Shall we halt at this crisis? Our firesides—society—the preservation of constitutional liberty—all urge that we consolidate and bring into active use our full and united strength. Is there one so base as to hesitate? No, no, not one!

Groesbeeck, Sept. 15, 1871.

DEMOCRATIC CIRCULAR

protected by more than one hundred armed Negroes. Prior to the securing of the warrants, the special police forces confined their operations to the city limits. As soon as the warrants were in the hands of the sheriff, Dr. J. J. Robertson was ordered to take control of the mounted police force and instructed to proceed with the sheriff and arrest the men who killed Applewhite. The posse proceeded to Merritt Trammel's headquarters where the murderers were reported to have taken refuge. Merritt and Giles Trammel informed the sheriff Cotton had been sent away but that Jones, one of the murderers,

could be arrested. The Trammel's were praised by the sheriff and the posse for their actions.¹⁹

News spread throughout the county that the Negroes were under arms and had threatened to burn the town. White people from all areas of the county began to enter the town. The sheriff leading Captain Richardson's company talked with the most outstanding citizens and decided to proceed to arrest the guilty parties. Mitch Cotton was arrested and placed in jail at Springfield. News of Cotton's incarceration quieted the people.

On October 4, Judge John W. Oliver who had been appointed by Governor Davis to fill a vacancy on the bench of the judicial district came to Groesbeck to warn the people against doing anything that would bring martial law. He made a few simple suggestions which the majority accepted.²⁰

More agitation led to the killing of a Negro, Bob Lee, by Arthur Simons. Simons was arrested, placed in jail, and wrote a confession admitting the homicide. Affidavits testifying to Simons' insanity were accepted and forwarded to Governor Davis in the hope military rule would not be established in the county.²¹

To make a bad situation worse, an election was held in the county during these troublesome days. The Registrar placed Captain Richardson's Company of State Guards on duty at the polls. Although it was a quiet election the Negroes were ordered by their leaders to stay away from the polls. Negroes appearing at the polls were publicly ordered to retire with the remark then was not the time for them to vote.²²

Disregarding all pleas, on October 9, Davis proclaimed martial law in Limestone and Freestone counties and assessed a penalty of fifty thousand dollars.²³ Citizens drew up a petition, containing two hundred fifty-two names, praying the legislature to save them from military rule. In part the petition said:

"We respectfully insist that we have violated no law as a people, everything done by us was at the command of the officers of the law, and for our own protection from the threats and menaces of a mob of infuriated men.

We would therefore appeal to you as the representatives of a free enlightened and law abiding people, to stand by us in this the darkest hour of our history—and avert the evils

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Memorial History*, 351.

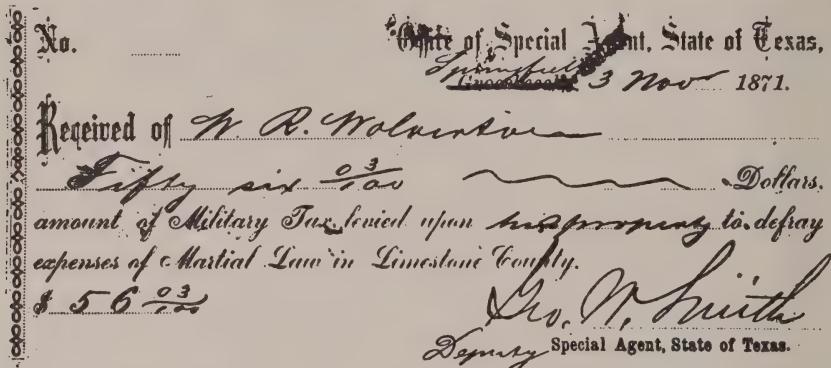
²¹Affidavits in Martial Law in Limestone County file in Texas State Archives.

²²*Memorial History*, 350.

²³For proclamation see the Martial Law in Limestone County file. See also, *Daily State Journal*, October 11, 1871, quoted in Webb, *The Texas Rangers*, 226.

and calamitous consequences which would be visited upon us by a declaration of martial law; and a suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and right of trial by jury.²⁴

Captain George W. Farrow was placed in command of the troops with headquarters at Springfield. On November 7, John Hancock was informing the people not to pay any tax.²⁵ But, the people were forced to pay the tax although they resented it. Arguments were lodged by various merchants protesting the payment of the tax on grounds that they were not intra-state businesses. Exception was made to no one.



Limestone county was plunged into a situation much worse than the war and which left a greater impact on its peoples. Conflicting views have been expressed by both races but the hatred for the Negro was manifest during the period.

An unrecorded reign of terror began in the vicinity of old Springfield with the appearance of a white man, known to the Negroes as Dixie.²⁶ According to elderly Negroes, Dixie proceeded unrestrained to murder their kind whenever and wherever he caught them. For more than thirty years a piece of rope dangled from a bending tree on the old Springfield-Groesbeck road and legend has it that Dixie hanged Seymour Abrams and Norville Rhodes there.²⁷ In fact, the period has given rise to many legends which, for lack of records, can not be authenticated. Negroes slept in the woods at night and those who had the courage to stay in their cabins saw that no lights were burning and all doors were securely barred and bolted.

So rollicky were these times that guards had to be placed around

²⁴"Memorial from the Citizens of Limestone County," MSS in Texas State Archives.

²⁵Telegram from John Hancock to A. F. Moss, November 7, 1871

²⁶Simp Dixon was killed near Springfield on February 2, 1870. It is thought that this Dixie is a relative of Simp Dixon.

²⁷Walter Cotton, *History of Negroes in Limestone County*, 18.

NOTICE!

SPECIAL MILITARY TAX!

Office Special Agent, State of Texas,

Kosciusko, Limestone Co., Texas.

OCTOBER 2nd, 1871.

Pursuant to orders received from

Major General A. G. Maloy, commanding State forces, in Limestone County, I am ordered to assess and levy a SPECIAL MILITARY TAX OF FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS. (\$40,000.00) to be paid by the citizens of Limestone County, to defray the expenses of Military Commission and State Troops now on duty in said County.

I therefore levy a Tax of $\frac{1}{10}$ percent, on the hundred dollars of all taxable property situated in said County, as per Assessment Rolls of 1871.

All persons owning property in Limestone County are notified to appear at my office in the city of Kosciusko, immediately, and pay the same. All persons refusing or failing to pay said Tax within three [3] days from above date, ten [10] per cent, will be added to their property levied upon and sold to satisfy said Tax.

GEO. W. FABROW,

Special Agent, State of Texas for Limestone County.

MILITARY TAX NOTICE

the towns at night. William H. Jackson recalled that a group of men rode past him and another guard into town, robbed the sheriff, stole his keys and released fifteen or more Negroes from the jail.²⁸ However, the group killed every Negro they released. Secret organizations

²⁸Testimony of William H. Jackson to E. L. Connally. Groesbeck *Journal*, May 15, 1936.

were organized throughout the county. No estimated damage has ever been made of the atrocious acts committed during these troublesome times, but it is safe to surmise that literally hundreds of Negroes were murdered. Various groups attempted to destroy records and, evidently, did a good job; few records have been located prior to 1874.

After the destruction of the courthouse at Springfield and its removal to Groesbeck, the race difficulties seem to have ended, at least as far as anything violent was concerned.

People in the county never forgave E. J. Davis for placing the county under martial law. At the time of Davis' death, L. J. Farrar was the county's Senator; having lived in the county at the time of the State Police activities he, personally, was against resolutions of respect but informed Alexander Terrell, "Very well, go ahead, Senator, but draw whatever you proposed to say D-d light if you expect my vote."²⁹ Farrar expressed the sentiments of the people. Until this day, the older people refuse to talk of those troublesome times. A common reply is, "I am only living for today and looking forward to the morrow. Let's never look back."

²⁹Norman G. Kittrell, *Governors Who Have Been and Other Public Men of Texas*, 54.

CHAPTER VI

The Railroad Era

COUNTY BUILDINGS

A great transformation took place in Limestone County following the Civil War. Almost without exception, the transformation may be attributed to the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. The railroad was responsible for the founding of the towns along its route; thus, her present towns are post-bellum railway products.

As a stimulant to railroad building, an early state legislature offered sixteen sections of state land for every mile of railroad. One of the first companies to take advantage of this offer was the Galveston and Red River Company, chartered in 1848; the company failed to meet the mileage requirement within the specified time and asked for additional time.¹ It was not until Paul Bremond became interested in the project did the road make any progress, for he secured help from Houstonians. On October 1, 1856, after twenty-five miles of road was completed from Houston to Cypress, the name of the company was changed to the Houston and Texas Central.²

In March 1868 the Houston and Texas Central's struggles in moving to the central prairies were described in newspapers as:

The Central's trade alone has extended it from Hempstead to its present terminus. Prior to that it was constructed principally by the indomitable energy of Paul Bremond, aided by liberal contributions of planters on the Brazos and all the upper country between the Brazos and Trinity Rivers. Many of the notes of men in this county paid for grading and ties below Hempstead. The road was subsequently sold out for debt, and purchased by its present manager, W. J. Hutchins, who generously proffered to reinstate the original stock-

¹S. G. Reed, "Early Railroad Building in Texas," *The Texas Almanac, 1939-1940*, 250.

²*Ibid.*

holders, upon payment to the treasurer of ten per cent on amount of their respective stocks. Many availed themselves of this privilege and everything went on harmoniously. The progress of the war, however, set the road back at least ten years, but since the 'break up' it has undergone thorough repairs and has been in running order for some time to Bryan, with a contract out for an additional thirty miles, and considerable of the grading done.³

Late in 1869 the railroad reached Limestone county and terminated at a point where a new town, Kosse, was founded.

The people's refusal to negotiate wisely with the railroad officials as well as D. M. Prendergast's domination of the town caused agitation for the removal of the county seat. Petitions were circulated alleging:

Springfield, the present county site for Limestone County was located some years ago by the Legislature and that the county then embraced a part of Falls, McClendon (*sic*) and the whole of Freestone county. That subsequently many changes have been made, and that at present the county of Limestone is so altered and changed to suit the citizens Falls, Freestone and Navarro counties that Springfield is left within eight miles of this county lines at one point and thirty at another. We look upon this as being anything but fair, as this constitution especially contemplates that the county sites shall be as near the centre as practicable (*sic*).⁴

Removal of the county site was by no means a new question. A large majority of the citizens opposed appropriating funds to build any county buildings at Springfield. However, it appears that little attention was given to the relocation of the county seat at this time.

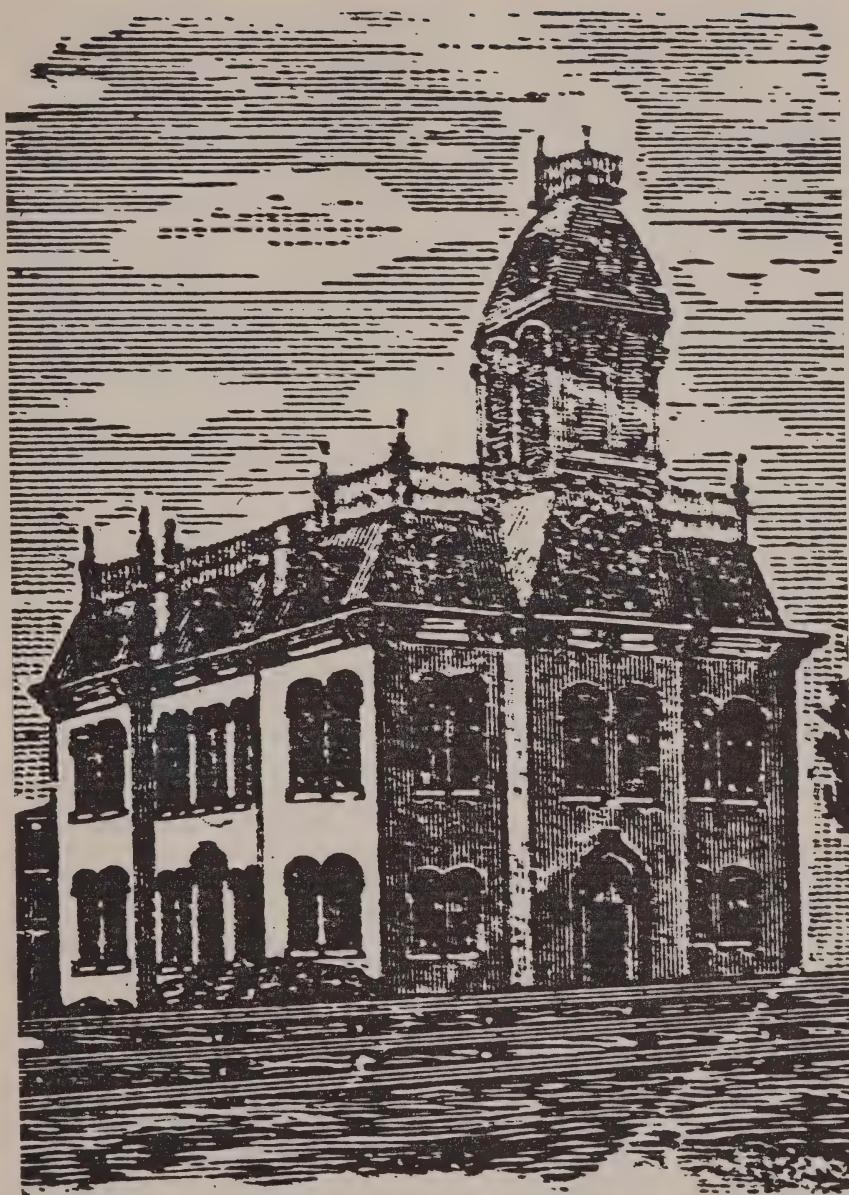
Groesbeck, founded by the railroad in 1870, was near the geographical center of the county; the location was advantageous because the town became a contender for the courthouse without actually realizing it. On October 24, 1873, fire of undetermined origin destroyed the courthouse at Springfield; all records were lost in the fire.

T. H. Sharp summoned a jury to probe the fire. A thorough and complete investigation was made after which the inquest jury announced that the burning could be attributed to the work of an arsonist.⁵ They were unable to agree on a possible suspect or suspects. Many legends have evolved around the burning. One story indicates the

³Memorial History, 357, quoting newspaper article.

⁴"A Memorial for a Change of the County Seat near the Centre of the County," in Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.

⁵Police Court Minutes, A, 148. County Warrants issued to T. H. Sharp and Oscar Wilie. The Docket is missing from the files.



COURTHOUSE 1878-1888

courthouse was burned by a prominent citizen who had some warrants issued against him for cattle rustling; another tale emphasizes the fact that Negroes burned the building to keep certain facts from being known, and a rarely told story stresses that the whites became so thoroughly disgusted with the Negro politicians that they "herded" them into the courthouse and set the building afire. Regardless of whom should be blamed, important records were lost which can never be replaced.

Petitions having already been circulated for the relocation of the county seat, and the railroad having by-passed Springfield caused J. H. Lofland to call an election to decide the best possible location for the courthouse. Records concerning the proposed relocation were destroyed, but on December 15, 1873, the following entry was made in the police minutes:

This is to certify that at an election held in said county on the 2nd day of December 1873 for the permanent location of the county seat of Limestone County Texas, I am satisfied that according to law, Groesbeck has received a sufficient number of votes, to entitle that place to be the seat of justice of said Limestone County.⁶

Shortly after this entry, the court ordered the county clerk, treasurer, and sheriff to move to Groesbeck immediately. On December 20, 1873, James Kimbell and County Clerk John Bruce Vallandingham transferred the county records consisting of a will and deed book to Groesbeck.⁷

After removal of the county archives to Groesbeck, the commissioner's court authorized the leasing of various buildings for county purposes. S. H. Bates rented a house for the grand jury room⁸ and the Groesbeck Masonic lodge leased its building to the county for \$10.00 monthly.⁹ A. W. Risien leased his building to the county for \$14.00 monthly, and most offices were located there. Experiences at Springfield caused the court to proceed cautiously, and consideration was given only to a fireproof building.

Before a courthouse was built, bids were received for the removal of the jail from Springfield to Groesbeck. In June 1874 Yarbro and Jackson received the contract to move and rebuild the jail, furnish all material, and complete it in every particular as perfectly as when originally built.¹⁰ Four months later, the jail was completed at a cost

⁶Police Court Minutes, A, 13.

⁷Groesbeck *Journal*, April 4, 1930.

⁸Bill from S. H. Bates to County Court, in Limestone County Archives.

⁹Bill from Groesbeck Masonic Lodge to County Court, in Limestone County Archives. Special dispensation had been granted to lodge to rent building to the county.

¹⁰Police Court Minutes, A, 63.

of \$1,500.¹¹ Groesbeck's old calaboose was moved to the jail yard by B. M. Usry; it was repaired and persons accused of petty offenses were incarcerated in it.¹²

It was not until July 1877 that the court had decided on the type of building to house the county officers. W. C. Dodson was appointed to submit plans and specifications and superintend the erection of the courthouse.¹³ Actual construction contracts were awarded to W. A. Williamson and Son and W. P. McFall; McFall was to supervise all brick work. Construction of this building progressed rapidly; failure to pay W. H. Jackson for the wood used in the kilns resulted in a lawsuit against the contractors.¹⁴ Built on block 102, it was described as an imposing brick edifice, with mansard roof, covered with slate, containing room for each of the county officers, a county and district courtroom, and cost \$23,000.¹⁵

Upon completion of the courthouse, the court decided to build a new jail. F. E. Ruffini was employed as the architect and in June 1880, bid announcements were advertised. The Texas Building Association was awarded the contract;¹⁶ bidding \$7,648 for the job. King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company was awarded the contract for all iron work.¹⁷ Shortly after construction began, the court permitted the contractor to remove the rock from the foundation of the old courthouse at Springfield to use in the foundation of the jail.¹⁸ In February, the Texas Building Association requested an extension of time on completion of the building. This action was prompted by the condemnation of the jail cistern; imperfect brick instead of hard select brick as specified in the contract were found.¹⁹ Even before the new structure was accepted, certain imperfections were found to exist. However, in March, Ruffini announced the completion of the jail and, on April 2, the county accepted the structure.²⁰ After its acceptance, the court contracted with Bailey and Pittman to paint the roof with a gum elastic fire proof paint.²¹ However, the building did not prove satisfactory and John Dillon was awarded a contract to make necessary repairs.²²

¹¹Bill from Yarbro and Jackson to County Court, in Limestone County Archives.

¹²Police Court Minutes, B, 46, 79.

¹³Police Court Minutes, B, 130.

¹⁴W. H. Jackson vs. W. A. Williamson and Son and W. P. McFall; records are in Limestone County Archives.

¹⁵Maggie Abercrombie, *History of Limestone County*, 93.

¹⁶Contract with Texas Building Association, July 6, 1880.

¹⁷Contract with King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Co., 1880.

¹⁸Special memorandum in Commissioner's Court Papers.

¹⁹County Commissioner's Minutes, C, 14.

²⁰Letter from F. E. Ruffini to Commissioner's Court, March 29, 1881.

²¹County Commissioner's Minutes, C, 37.

²²*Ibid.*, 520.

The courthouse was much in the same condition. Many repairs had been made on the building which proved unsatisfactory and Albert Ulrich suggested necessary repairs could be made on the courthouse by taking out the walls without tearing down the entire building.²³ On June 1, 1888, the bid of R. H. Stuckey and Toney Farmer in the amount of \$13,500 for tearing down and rebuilding the courthouse was accepted by the commissioner's court.²⁴ While this work was going on, S. S. Walker leased both stories of his building to the county and Kimbell and Kimbell leased part of their building for the county judge's office.²⁵ Following this action, there developed a strong move toward another election for the relocation of the county site. People were becoming aggravated with the building of courthouses and jails in Groesbeck. Petitions were circulated, asking the county judge to call an election to decide the question. A rather warm political contest over the removal ensued with both pros and cons adopting platforms helpful to their sides. Thornton and Mexia were making strong bids for the county site; Groesbeck seemed to feel that since the courthouse was there nothing could be done to move it. The election held on July 28, 1888, saw a record turnout of 3,232 voters to decide the question. Judge L. B. Cobb entered the official count as:

votes for removal to Mexia 1726
votes for removal to Thornton 376
votes for remaining at Groesbeck 1130.²⁶

Mexia lacked only 429 votes winning the contest, as it took two-thirds of the entire vote to decide such an issue. Judge L. B. Cobb and the court ordered the county seat of Limestone County to remain at Groesbeck.²⁷

Following the election to decide the relocation of the county seat issue, the Commissioner's Court in their August term began with routine matters, such as ordering the payment of \$2.76 to the Dallas News Co. for advertising bids to repair the courthouse and ordering the payment of \$25.00 to P. P. Brown for the moving of the furniture and records to the Walker and Kimbell and Kimbell buildings.²⁸ A major problem was decided at this term:

It appearing to the court that this county has no sufficient courthouse and it further appearing that there are no funds on hand with the county treasurer wherewith to pay the sum of \$13,500.00 heretofore contracted by this court to be paid

²³*Ibid.*, 538.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 543.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 555.

²⁶Commissioner's Court Minutes, C, 556.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸*Ibid.*, 558.

Stuckey and Farmer to take down and rebuild the courthouse of this county and it appearing that this county has no bonds outstanding . . . (the court will issue) thirteen bonds each of the denomination and sum of \$1,000.00 and one bond in the denomination of \$500.00. . . .

It is further ordered that there be levied an annual ad-valorem tax of 5¢ on the \$100.00 worth of property in the county subject to taxation by law for the purpose of paying the interest that shall annually accrue on said bonds, and of providing a sinking fund for the payment of said bonds for each year.²⁹

Excavation work began in September and the contract was amended to provide a correction in the excavation work.³⁰ J. H. Bradley was employed by the county to supervise the brick work, especially to see that no condemned materials were used in the building.³¹ The courthouse was completed in May 1889; upon completion the final contract was awarded to W. S. Walter to haul all rubbish from the grounds and clean the court yard.³²

Everyone was happy when the building was completed. At long last, citizens in all parts of the county thought that they had a structure which would last. In less than two years the county received another shock; on February 1, 1891, the courthouse was destroyed by fire; all records in the vault were saved. However, all divorce proceedings and many county approved statements as well as court records were lost. Tom Whatley covered the vault with tin flashing as soon as possible.³³

The commissioner's court tackled the problem; they had to build another courthouse before they got the previous one paid for. In March 1891, Tom Whatley was awarded the contract to tear down the old courthouse walls and remove the brick from the foundation and Albert Ulrich was employed as the architect for the new courthouse.³⁴ The \$58,700 contract was awarded to R. H. Stuckey who promised to have a new building ready by June 1, 1892.³⁵ This courthouse contract afforded much political oratory and led to the printing of many circulars, all alleging errors. In one such circular in the election of 1894, A. J. Harper said:

. . . my opponent says he had a courthouse to build. True,

²⁹*Ibid.*, 564.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 571.

³¹*Ibid.*, 577-578.

³²*Ibid.*, D, 20.

³³Commissioner's Court Minutes, D, 145.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 148.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 153-165.

but let us see what he had with which to build it; and if any of the taxes he collected went into the building of the house. The contract for the courthouse was originally let for \$58,760.00. Afterwards changes were made in the plans and extra work done in excavations costing \$1,969.75, making the total cost of the building as shown by the records of \$66,729.75; and the building was accepted and paid for at the August Term, 1892, as shown by the records, which was prior to the completion of his first term as County Judge. We will now see where the money came from with which to build the court-house. There was collected in insurance on the building burned, the sum of \$15,000.00; there was collected from the sale of bonds \$50,000, making \$65,000.00 cash in the treasury with which to pay for a \$60,729.00 building, leaving a balance of \$4,270.25 in the treasury. Consequently none of the money collected during those two years for court-house purposes went into the building of the court-house.³⁶

However, almost from the time of completion, structural defects appeared. A consulting engineer made a survey of the building and reported, "I find bad fractures or cracks in the west wall of the north and south corridor. The one at the north and extending to the top of the wall as shown on the outside of the building is, in my opinion, the worst crack in the building."³⁷ Other cracks were found which were alluded to defects in the foundation. Again, there was considerable agitation toward relocating the county seat. Plans were forming for condemnation of the structure unless it could be repaired;³⁸ such action, it was assumed, would lead to the removal of the courthouse to another town.

In April 1909 E. C. Hosford and Co. and the Mutual Construction Co. were employed to repair the courthouse.³⁹ The building was practically rebuilt; the interior was changed, more offices were created and others enlarged, while the district court room's gallery increased the seating capacity. A complete system of steam heat and sewerage was installed. A clock was placed in the tower with a 2,000-pound bell. The entire cost of the improvements was about \$27,000 and was done without the issuance of bonds, the county having sufficient funds on hand to complete the work.⁴⁰

A. J. Harper, a bitter foe of W. G. Rucker, wanted to leave the

³⁶Reply of A. J. Harper, Candidate for County Judge to the Secret Circular of W. G. Rucker, in collection of Ray A. Walter.

³⁷Letter from James E. Flanders to James Kimbell, February 16, 1907.

³⁸Letter from James E. Flanders to James Kimbell, March 21, 1907.

³⁹Commissioner's Court Minutes, E, 390-391.

⁴⁰Kosse Cyclone, January 27, 1910.

county a building during his administration and decided to rebuild the jail. The order of the commissioner's court reads:

the county judge (will) advertise in the latter part of June for bids to rebuild the jail on the present foundation, according to the same plans and specifications as built on before except that the overhead ceiling to be sealed with shiplap and canvassed and papered instead of being plastered, and that the roofing shall be changed so that the tower shall be left off the center of the roof and each contractor will be expected to submit roof plans.⁴¹

C. J. Kauhl was awarded the contract for \$3,720.00 for tearing down and rebuilding the jail.⁴² Samuel Risien was employed to superintend the building of the jail.⁴³ Kauhl's and Risien's work must have been superb, for the jail is still standing and used by the county.

However, the history of the courthouses is not yet complete. A special meeting of the county commissioners decided in December 1922 to build a new courthouse. It is actually the result of a tie vote. Ed Andrews and J. M. Kennedy voted for building a new courthouse and J. R. Dulaney and E. R. Leach voted against it. As it was a tie vote, the deciding vote had to be cast by the county judge; Judge H. F. Kirby voted for building the courthouse.⁴⁴ After the commissioner's court voted to build a new courthouse, they immediately entered into an agreement with W. M. Rice Construction Company to prepare all plans, specifications and details required for the "erection and completion of a three story and basement, modern, fireproof Court House, same to be erected in the City of Groesbeck, County of Limestone, State of Texas, and upon such grounds or site as may be provided for same by said Commissioners' Court."⁴⁵

The court decided to locate the new courthouse in front of the old one, and proceeded to purchase property from Joshua Wood, J. E. Bradley, Anglin Brothers, and R. C. Erwin. With the laying of the cornerstone on December 20, 1923, the relocation question was finally settled. One year later, the building was completed at a cost exceeding \$200,000, and the court entered in its minutes:

WHEREAS, the said W. M. Rice Construction Company has delivered all materials and all of the work covered by said contract has been finally completed to the entire satisfaction of the Commissioners' Court of Limestone County, Texas.⁴⁶

⁴¹Commissioner's Court Minutes, E, 389.

⁴²Contract of C. J. Kauhl, in Limestone County Commissioners Papers, July 10, 1901. Commissioner's Court Minutes, E, 424-426.

⁴³Commissioner's Court Minutes, E, 433.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, I, 111.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 112.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, K, 58-65.

It is a magnificent structure, completely fire proof, and regarded as one of the most beautiful in the State.

TOWNS

Small towns contribute to greater independence and simplicity of life, and Limestone county became known as a county of small towns. The principal towns are Kosse, Thornton, Groesbeck, and Coolidge, all post war railroad products.

Kosse

After the Civil War the Houston and Texas Central Railroad began laying track, pushing farther inland. Principal stockholders of the railroad—Abraham Groesbeeck, William Robinson Baker, William Marsh Rice, and others—organized the Houston and Texas Central Townsite Company for laying out townsites along the railroad. A work stoppage at the end of the line made the company realize that point would be the terminus of the railroad for a year or more so a new town was laid out in the southeastern corner of Limestone County and named Kosse, in honor of Theodore Kosse.

Theodore Kosse, a native of Berlin, Germany, settled in Houston in 1848. A thoroughly educated civil engineer, he was mainly instrumental in surveying and locating the line of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad, in the employ of which company he continued until the day of his death. Described as a lovable, hospitable, charitable, and unassuming man, he was prominent in Houston circles; at one time he owned the Shrimph House and served as city engineer for one or more terms. Kosse's home was located on the corner of Congress and Hamilton which, at that time, was the elite part of Houston; he spent many hours working in the beautiful garden surrounding his home.⁴⁷

One hundred acres were contained in the original townsite. Lots sold at exorbitant prices, and those refusing to pay these huge amounts moved to the edge of the town and founded a village named Mugginsville. Several large establishments such as Sanger Brothers and Levy and Company were located there. Mugginsville grew rapidly and became a sizeable place, with an awful reputation.⁴⁸ Removal of the terminus to Groesbeck caused the town to vanish as a majority of the business establishments were operated by railroad merchants.

Development of a city government for Kosse began in 1871 when Governor Edmund J. Davis appointed Smith P. Young as mayor and R. C. Robison, D. F. Iglehart, V. Block, Alf Bryan, and L. E. Leasiven as aldermen.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Letter and clippings from Bertha Kosse Schmidt, granddaughter of Theodore Kosse, September 8, 1956. Kosse died December 1, 1881.

⁴⁸A. J. Burleson, "In the Long Ago," Kosse *Cyclone* clipping.

⁴⁹Election Register 47A in Texas State Archives.

The first newspaper was established in 1869 by W. C. Tomlinson and Louis M. Openheimer and named Kosse *Weekly Enterprise*,⁵⁰ this paper followed the railroad and moved to Groesbeck two years later. *The Rising Sun, People's Vindicator, Kosse Local*, and *Kosse News* preceded the *Kosse Cyclone* which was established in 1884 by James O. Jones.⁵¹ People often asked Jones why such a name was given to a paper and he answered repeatedly, "Kosse was a good live town and I decided to give the people something breezy, and go the other towns one better, so I called the paper the *Cyclone*"⁵² For more than sixty years a *Cyclone* hit Kosse every Friday, and few towns can boast of such help from such an object. Several years ago, "Believe It or Not" took a whack at the paper. During 1943, the paper consolidated with the *Groesbeck Journal* which now prints a one-page supplement.

Religion was an important factor in the development of Kosse. S. S. Cross organized the first Sunday school and preached the first sermon.⁵³ Robert Crawford and Calvin Bratton taught in a Union Sunday school for several years. Methodist, Baptist, and Cumberland Presbyterian Churches were organized.

Among the first permanent residents of the town were Henry Bassett, T. A. Ezell, James F. Beaty, John Norris, John Flannigan, Dr. B. F. Ouzts, Herbert Smith, Dr. W. W. Grissom, A. J. Burleson, William Raiford Hammond, Dr. John R. Taylor, Dr. Thomas S. Moore, Colonel Tillman Ingram, W. S. Stephenson, Nimrod Markham, Llewellyn Robison, J. R. Erwin, Robert W. Turner, and countless others.

By 1880 Kosse had a population of 500, listed thirty-nine businesses, Methodist Church, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and Baptist Church. Much attention was being given to the Fire Brick and Tile Company which manufactured fire bricks, tiles, terra cotta work, and earthen-ware of all kinds; this company reported \$100,000 in business each year.⁵⁴

An early directory of the town listed the following merchants:
J. L. Conoly, general merchant; Proctor and Arnett, dry goods; E. D. Stedman, general merchant; A. Williams, dry goods; S. L. and L. T. Robertson, general merchants; M. L. Jackson, general merchant; B. F. Ouzts, druggist; N. Markham, general merchant; C. C. Conoly, druggist; Hammond and Ferguson, furniture dealer; J. M. Dillon, general merchants; S. H. Richardson, groceries; J. G. Moore, groceries; W. W. Irvin and Co., groceries; Conoly House, C. C. Conoly, proprietor, hotel; Fire Brick and Tile Company, brick and cement; I. N. Roark,

⁵⁰Ray A. Walter, *Checklist of Known Publications, Limestone County, Texas, 2.*

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²*Kosse Cyclone*, September 6, 1934.

⁵³*Texas Baptist Herald*, February 22, 1871.

⁵⁴Maggie Abercrombie, *History of Limestone County*, 98.

liquor dealer; W. H. Ferguson, lumber dealer; Arthur Wood, lumber dealer; Robert W. Turner, nurseryman, seedman, florist, and fruit grower; and J. W. Dillon, stables.⁵⁵

All of the first buildings were wooden structures. Dr. B. F. Ouzts erected the first stone building.⁵⁶ Several brick buildings were built in the late seventies; many of the old wooden buildings were razed or destroyed by fire. Perhaps the most disastrous fire occurred on December 22, 1895, when the business blocks were destroyed. The incident was reported:

The fire originated in the second story of the H. C. Markham building. Following is a list of the losses:

H. C. Markham & Co., bldg and stock	\$28,000
Dr. W. C. Blalock, stock, library, etc.	2,000
I. F. Silverstein, stock	500
S. Flaum, stock	250
B. F. Ouzts, bldg and stock	3,000
D. P. Hammond, bldg	2,000
F. Allen, stock	100
Drs. A. T. and B. B. Ezell, lib, books, accounts, etc.	3,000
W. A. Jernigan, stock	1,000
W. B. King, bldg and stock	2,500
H. Smith, bldg	2,000
D. O. Brooks, stock	500
Fenner and Whitlow, stock	800
L. T. Whitlow, bldg	1,000
Cyclone Printing Office, fixtures, etc.	5,000
Ernest Ouzts, stock	100
W. H. Ferguson, bldg.	2,000
Hammond & Henry, removal of goods	500
Robertson & Williams, removal of goods	500
Adam & Bryant, damage to bldg,	
The Masonic lodge lost everything	
Knights of Pythias and Odd Fellows suffered partial losses. ⁵⁷	

This fire ended the period of wooden buildings as replacements were brick structures.

In 1921 the Kosse Chamber of Commerce was organized and chartered. Great work was done by this organization which sponsored the first agricultural community fair, the widely publicized "More Feed on More Acres" contest, rebuilt the Headsville telephone line, instituted

⁵⁵*Business Directory, 1878.*

⁵⁶"Tribute to Dr. B. F. Ouzts," Typewritten copy in Limestone County Collection.

⁵⁷*Kosse Cyclone*, January 30, 1895.

a road improvement program, built a roadside park, and sponsored many activities.

Discovery of oil in 1922 brought prosperity to Kosse. Bedlam broke loose. Many buildings were built; W. D. Allen built a theater, seven business rooms, and a modern filling station. Doctor M. V. Hill and Dr. J. H. Mitchell built a two-story building; the bottom story was leased to Limestone Motor Company and the second story was occupied by Doctors John and Joe Mitchell and Judge Winfield. Kosse Motor Company erected a building and First National Bank completely remodeled their building. This prosperity was short lived.

Another claim of Kosse is the freak Jones well. Headlined as a gusher with an estimated flow of 20,000 barrels proved false. Oil flowed for three days and stopped. Expectations for the development of a Kosse oil field did not materialize.

Establishment of a post office took place in 1870 when Smith Young was appointed postmaster. Other postmasters of the last century included Samuel H. Richardson, Benjamin F. Ouzts, A. James Burleson, Samuel M. Jones and Sidney M. Jones.

Thornton

Thornton was named in honor of Nathaniel Macon Thornton who sold the necessary right of way at such a low figure the railroad felt they should honor him. Established in 1871, it is equidistant between Groesbeck and Kosse.

A post office was established there in 1873. William L. Wright was appointed the first postmaster. Other early postmasters included William C. Cleveland, George W. Parten, Frank E. Cleveland, James L. White, and James E. Foust.

Thornton had a vigorous growth. In 1880, it was reported having a population of 200, three churches: Methodist, Baptist, and Christian, thirteen business houses and one Masonic lodge.⁵⁸ An early directory lists the following merchants: Henry Fox, groceries; A. F. Henderson, saloon; James R. Mills and J. C. Spencer, drugs; J. L. White, general merchant and D. F. White, dry goods and groceries.⁵⁹

Much of the early life centered around Thornton Institute, founded in 1877 by Edward Coke Chambers. Many contend the school was partially sponsored by the Christian church. After Chambers sold the school to Henry P. Davis, it began losing students and was eventually turned into the Thornton school.

Thornton Masonic Lodge 486 was chartered December 14, 1878. Thirty-two persons are listed as charter members.⁶⁰ Much later the

⁵⁸Maggie Abercrombie, *History of Limestone County*, 98.

⁵⁹Clipping from early Dun *Directory* sent to Roscoe Wiley.

⁶⁰The charter members are: J. L. White, Thomas Vinson, S. W. Pearce, W. E. Rogers, L. E. Clendennen, W. B. Loper, Ali Springfield, W. K. Rogers, G. W. Herod, J. C. Spencer, N. G. Hudson, M. McKing, Thomas C. Harper, E. C.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Woodmen of the World, and Order of Eastern Star constituted organizations.

Development of a city government began early. Several attempts were made to incorporate the town but it appears the corporation collapsed. In 1907 the town was incorporated for municipal purposes and the following officers were elected: W. C. Cayton as mayor, Lonnie Kendrick as marshal, Robert L. Polk, B. B. Barnett, J. E. Barnett, C. W. Terry, and J. I. Brown as aldermen.

Several newspapers appeared. One of the first was the Thornton *Herald*, established March 6, 1890, by the Greer Brothers; James A. Greer was editor. Others were *Democratic-Eagle*, edited by Abner Eubanks; Thornton *Topic*, edited by J. E. Haddick, Thornton *News*, edited by D. P. Saunders and J. P. Walling, Thornton *Press*, edited by Davis; and *Limestone County Press*, owned by Thornton Printing Company. The paper with the longest history was the *Hustler*, founded in 1910, and published until World War II when it merged with the Groesbeck *Journal* which issues a one-page supplement⁶¹.

Growth actually began in earnest in the early 1900's for a magazine noted "at present the town have 1,000 people, 18 brick stores, electric lights, one bank, two steam gins, shops, lumber, a commission house, hotel, three church houses, two weekly newspapers, and other conveniences."⁶²

The 1907 trade edition of the *Press* listed the following merchants: Barron Hardware and Lumber Co., hardware and lumber; Cannon Brothers, dry goods and groceries; Wilson Brothers, general merchants and farm implements; A. P. Ellis, drugs; First National Bank, J. E. Barnett, cashier, and J. E. Barron, president; William Gilford, insurance; F. B. Sanders, meats; W. L. Cannon and Son, furniture, undertaking goods, and harness supplies; J. C. Spencer, groceries and racket goods; C. W. Terry and Son, groceries; H. J. Cook and Son, ginner and manufacturer of shingles; John C. McClelland, cotton gin and grist mill; J. I. Brown, drugs; E. D. Dickey, general merchant; Robert L. Polk, grocer; People's pharmacy, B. D. Wheelock, proprietor; J. L. Fenner livery and feed stables; J. F. Taylor and Son, general merchant; W. Gidden, groceries, restaurant, and drinks; J. M. Taylor, blacksmith, woodwork, and horseshoeing; Callie Cayton, blacksmith and horseshoeing; and J. S. Palmer, barber.⁶³

Cyrus F. Smythe landed the first airplane in Thornton on Feb-

Chambers, William Cleveland, J. E. Chism, I. J. Pringle, James R. Mills, W. J. Archer, R. E. Moore, J. W. Plunket, G. T. Brown, James McKenzie, M. L. Rogers, S. A. Bradley, J. A. Hill, W. A. Ball, W. C. Jones, D. F. White, L. E. Cowart, A. L. Seale, and J. L. Ellis

⁶¹Ray A. Walter, *Checklist of Known Publications, Limestone County, Texas*, 5.

⁶²*Southland*, undated page.

⁶³*Limestone County Press*, September 28, 1907.

ruary 10, 1918, flying from Ellington Field at Houston.⁶⁴ Being the first plane to land in the county prompted an editor to predict "aeroplanes promise to be as common as the automobile,"⁶⁵ though it was considered a novel sight at that time.

Thornton people took an active interest in the political activity of the county and organized a club known as the Democratic Cattle Company. Not only did the name attract interest but their advertisements were unique:

BILL OF SALE

The State of Texas
County of Limestone

Know all men by these presents: That the Thornton Democratic Cattle Company, of said State and County, being sole owners of a certain brand of cattle, usually known as the Straddle-Bug brand, running on the range in said county, being desirous to dispose of them, particularly owing to the depreciation in prices of such animals since the late Anthony and Barber election, do by these presents, for and in consideration of the sum of 5 cents per head, paid and to be paid, by the Republican Party, of said State, grant, sell and convey unto said Republican Party, all the herein—below described stock of steers, all of said Straddle-Bug brand.

And it is expressly understood and agreed that we said grantors herein, make no warranty as to the nature, character or temperament of said cattle, as many of them are very skittish, frolicful and unruly. It is also understood and stipulated that we, said grantors, make no guaranty as to the numbers of said stock, this being impossible to ascertain until after the ensuing November. Nor do we bind ourselves to make delivery, said Republican Party agreeing to accept a range delivery, taking said animals as they run, and as they can find them in the brush, woods and bottoms of said Limestone County.

Nor, on account of the prevailing warm weather during which said cattle were branded, do we insure them free from screwworms, or bugs and insects. But we assert that we exercised every precaution in the matter, applying unlimited quantities of soap and tallow to their hides, after such branding. We here append names and descriptions of the principal beeves included in this sale to-wit:

1st: L. G. Aspley. A rather grave and reverend old fellow, and labors under the delusion that he is running for County

⁶⁴Letter from Cyrus F. Smythe, January 22, 1951. *Houston Post*, February 10, 1918, and *Groesbeck Journal*, February 15, 1918.

⁶⁵Kosse *Cyclone*, February 14, 1918.

Judge. His dementia however is not violent and he is perfectly harmless.

2nd: G. D. Waite. Tame and playful as a kitten, but warranted to work anywhere. A very gentle brute, if properly used. Thinks he is running for sheriff.

3rd: R. V. Hendrix. Lead brute of our herd, and bellows constantly. Imagines he is in the race for District Clerk. He is a real freak of nature, and could be readily sold to any Dime Museum at an advantageous price.

4th: A. P. Smythe. The less said here, the better. Anybody desiring references can write Robertson County. Prances and cavorts around considerably, dreaming that he is out for County Clerk.

5th: Spectacles Wilson. A rare bird, and crys, like a child for the moon, for the office of assessor. Is an inventor of marked ability—in his own alleged mind—and thinks himself a genius: but God unfortunately differs with him. At his inception, the Almighty must have said, "Lo and behold! I will now make unto Myself a d--d fool." And the old man seems to have got there with both feet, and arms gracefully extended.

6th: Isaac Raborn. Has a wild idea that he is bolting along for Treasurer, and is jubilant because he defeated his brother steer, Solon Rasco. Very unmanageable, and is said to bellow loudly for a hundred other beeves to follow his lead in a crusade of extermination against Democrats.

7th: Hampton Steele. On this steer we pride ourselves. He is the flower of our flock. Florid complexion, and Titian, old-gold hair. If we had nothing else but runts, Hamp ought to sell our herd. Thinks he is trotting for Collector.

8th: Rev. Berry Sanders. A fine old fellow, but had to be branded twice, and his hide is probably in bad condition. Feet insured to be sound. Thinks he is running for the legislature, but isn't even crawling. Said to be imbued with a ferocious desire for a fist the size of an elephant, and an arm 18 ft. long, with which to wipe Democrats out of existence.

Also many other brush stock, the numbers of which cannot now be ascertained. But it is hereby understood that wherever any agent of said Republican Party can find a Billy-Goat politician with our Straddle-Bug brand upon him, said agent is authorized to take him in out of the wet, whether maverick, running wild or outlaw.

To have and to hold, unto said Republican Party, their heirs and assigns forever.

Witness the hand and corporate seal of said grantor Com-

pany at Thornton, Limestone County, Texas, this 18th day of June, A.D. 1892⁶⁶

People despised the Republican Party as it was blamed for many atrocious acts committed during the martial law and reconstruction period. These periods furnished Democrats with ample political material used in making scathing attacks against the Republican Party and those associated with it. Older citizens swear they will vote for no one unless he is a nominee of the Democratic Party as that party came to their rescue.

Groesbeck

Abraham Groesbeeck purchased 984 acres in the Elisha Anglin survey on August 25, 1869, from H. J. Buddington.⁶⁷ In turn, the acreage was transferred to the Houston and Texas Central Townsite Company which laid out a town plat and named it Groesbeeck, in honor of Abraham Groesbeeck, a director of the railroad and town-site company.

Groesbeeck continually worked for the improvement and development of Texas. He served as an officer in many companies, including president of the Buffalo Bayou Ship Channel Company, Houston and Texas Central Railroad, and Houston Brick Works as well as vice-president of the Houston East and West Texas Railway Company. He built the four-story Capitol Hotel which was acquired by William Marsh Rice; after the death of Rice control eventually went to Jesse Jones who built the Rice Hotel. Groesbeeck died February 7, 1886, in Houston.⁶⁸

The main streets of Groesbeeck were intended to be those on each side of the depot grounds parallel with the track. People thwarted this intention regarding main streets by building on Navasota and Ellis Streets instead of Railroad Avenue.⁶⁹ Following dedication of the town on February 20, 1871,⁷⁰ lots began to sell rapidly. Among those purchasing lots in February and March were Charles Langner, E. B. Stork, F. Hasser and Company, Mrs. Mary A. Key, J. H. Bringhurst, George Washington Jackson, Seth H. Bates, Logan Almaren Stroud, F. F. Collins, and Clem R. Waters.⁷¹ A majority of the first deeds were prepared by J. G. Gooch, an itinerant attorney.⁷²

⁶⁶*Limestone New Era*, June 23, 1892.

⁶⁷*Limestone County Deeds*, C, 175-176.

⁶⁸While some people claim A. Groesbeeck died on January 23, 1886, the date on his tombstone is February 7, 1886.

⁶⁹*Memorial History*, 366.

⁷⁰*Limestone County Deeds*, C, 172-174.

⁷¹*Limestone County Deeds*, B, 352; C, 273; E, 279; A, 34; N, 541; A, 168; E, 532; 90, 205; H, 624; and B, 349.

⁷²Charles Langner Deed to A. Anglin, April 29, 1871. MSS with notation "Prepared by J. G. Gooch."

Development of a city government began on April 11, 1871, when the town was incorporated by an act of the legislature.⁷³ Isaiah Medlock, Elijah McCullough, John Bradley, Haywood Trammel, and York Jackson were appointed to lay off and define its limits. Governor E. J. Davis appointed the first officials which included Clem R. Waters as mayor, J. H. Patrick as marshal, and the following aldermen: James Moore, Alonzo L. Steele, John Bradley, Elijah McCullough, Henry Rickelman, and Isaac Jackson.⁷⁴ Moore and McCullough failed to qualify and Bradley declined the appointment.

A month before Davis proclaimed martial law he appointed Adolph Zadek as mayor and J. F. Pells as marshal. Zadek, intimate friend of Davis, was a strong Union man and his removal from office appalled the people. Fearful of the future, a state of confusion was rampant and soon led to the collapse of the city government.⁷⁵

In a letter to the *Daily Telegram*, Steel Pen described the terminus to be:

... beautiful for situation. In this respect few if any of its senior towns on the Texas Central excell it. The main business part of the place occupies a commanding eminence, from which the adjacent country for miles around is plainly visible. It is a prairie location, surrounded on all sides by timber, at from one to three miles distant. ... the local situation and surroundings of Groesbeck would seem favorable to health. I do not think that mud will greatly abound.

... the present population is at least one thousand, which will, probably be doubled within the next twenty days. It is thought that at least one hundred buildings are now in the course of erection. The number of mechanics now employed in various branches is supposed to be between four and five hundred. The character of the buildings being erected is superior to that of the first which have been built in any

⁷³*Laws of Texas*, 160, 237-240.

⁷⁴Election Register, 47A.

⁷⁵Mayors of Groesbeck following Zadek:

S. H. Williams—appointed October 10, 1871.

J. S. Thurmond—February 20, 1872. Removed April 16, 1872.

George Ruby—April 16, 1872. Commission revoked.

George Ruby—May 24, 1872. Revoked July 10, 1872.

Richard Andrews—July 15, 1872.

D. M. Barclay—

Oscar Wiley—

Marshals during this period were John Walder, J. H. Patrick, and O. L. Thompson.

Aldermen during this period were Charles Jacobs, J. Morgan, Alfred Bryan, Washington Harkey, A. M. Perry, R. N. Pryor, J. R. McDonald, George Stroube, J. C. Welch, Silas Cook, and E. B. Stork. Many of the marshals and aldermen failed to qualify, declined the appointment, or had their commissions revoked.

town on the railroad. This indicates permanency of intention on the part of the builders. I spent two days in Groesbeck without noticing more than one intoxicated individual. . . .

. . . Already two of the religious denominations have selected suitable grounds on which to erect church edifices. The friends of the Methodist Church anticipate dispatch in the erection of their building. For this purpose liberal donations have been promised—one man not reported wealthy, giving five hundred dollars. . . . The Methodists seemed determined to erect a church edifice which shall be a credit to the place. . . .

Arrangements have been made for the prompt organization of a Union Sunday School, in which all the friends of that institution will heartily cooperate.⁷⁶

One month later, the town had an estimated population of 3,000 and was rapidly increasing.⁷⁷ During the first year of existence the estimated population was between 15,000 and 25,000.⁷⁸

On April 12, 1871, a post office was established. From its inception the post office listed the town as Groesbeck though the town was dedicated as Groesbeeck. James N. Barthalow served two weeks as postmaster to be replaced by Fred W. Reinehardt, a polite and accommodating man.⁷⁹

Buildings erected in Groesbeck at this time are too numerous to mention, but among the more familiar names are Amos M. Perry and Company, Block Brothers, Granville A. Wheat and Company, Clark and Key, Tom Padgett and Company, Peyton Parker House, C. E. Van Horn and Company, Estes, Randleman, and Maytum, and countless others. Purchase of a lot on June 1, 1871, by Isaac Lehman

⁷⁶Houston Daily Telegraph, April 12, 1871.

⁷⁷Texas Baptist-Herald, May 31, 1871.

⁷⁸Dallas Morning News, November 18, 1923.

⁷⁹Postmasters at Groesbeck were:

James N. Barthalow	April 12, 1871
Fred W. Reinehardt	April 28, 1871
George W. Farrow	June 5, 1872
Alonzo L. Steele	December 23, 1873
Drew D. Pender	April 12, 1881
Mrs. Sue L. Johnson	June 9, 1887
Alonzo L. Steele	July 17, 1889
Lela Tyus	March 27, 1893
Lela Tyus (Padgett)	February 7, 1894
Elizabeth Rhea	November 22, 1898
John T. Cox	January 22, 1915
Larkin B. Richardson	April 15, 1925
Present postmaster, Harry L. Humble, succeeded Lon E. Eubanks.	

and Phillip Sanger brought the removal of Sanger Brothers from Kosse to Groesbeck.⁸⁰

Louis M. Openheimer and W. C. Tomlinson moved their printing press from Kosse in 1871 and established the Groesbeck *Enterprise*, the first newspaper in the town. Next came the Groesbeck *Herald*, edited by Thomas J. Gibson and H. N. Atkinson, followed by the Groesbeck *Argus*, edited by R. F. Mattison and W. H. Frisbie, which changed its name to the Groesbeck *Clarion* after Frisbie sold his interest to C. B. George.⁸¹ These newspapers were published only a short time, but the *Limestone New Era* established by L. L. Foster brought a permanent press. W. C. Morris founded the Groesbeck *Journal* in 1892 which eventually absorbed the *New Era*, expanded its operations, and became one of the largest weeklies in Central Texas; Jack R. Hawkins purchased the plant in 1930, and by his ingenuity, down-to-earth columns, witticism, and his wife's "Comments" continues to publish and edit a superb, old-fashioned, weekly newspaper.

But, among newspaper men the most outstanding was Lafayette Lumpkin Foster who left his footprints everywhere. Born near Cummings, Georgia, on November 27, 1851, he moved to Limestone County when eighteen years of age and settled at Horn Hill. Through the forceful preaching of Ezekiel J. Billington, he joined the Baptist church and decided to enter the ministry. Working at odd jobs, he saved enough money to attend Waco University which he left in 1873 to move to Groesbeck. Foster took an active part in all the own's activities and was the guiding spirit behind the erection of the first Baptist church building. A minister, he became prominent in Baptist circles and was president of the General Association when that body consolidated with the State Convention to form the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Entering politics, Foster was elected representative for two terms, and in 1884 was the youngest man ever to have the position of Speaker of the House. Among his other offices were commissioner of insurance, statistics and history and a member of the first Railroad Commission. At the time of his death on December 2, 1901, Foster was president of Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College.⁸²

Several factors contributed to a decline in Groesbeck's population. Large numbers of people moved to Corsicana when the terminus was moved to that city. Establishment of Mexia caused some to move there. But, more than anything else, martial law and the reconstruction "conspiracy" forced many people to move elsewhere. In less than a year, Groesbeck had dwindled from a city of several thousand to

⁸⁰Deed from F. F. Collins to I. L. and P. Sanger, June 1, 1871. MSS in possession of Ray A. Walter. (Writer's great uncle purchased the property at a later date.)

⁸¹Ray A. Walter, *Checklist of Known Publications, Limestone County, Texas*, 1.

⁸²L. L. Foster material contributed by Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College Library. (Condensed.)

one that had a difficult time to count a hundred. These factors actually caused the town to begin over on a more solid foundation.

Race riots at Springfield following martial law caused many people to start leaving that town in 1872. Some moved to Groesbeck and others moved to Mexia. Removal of Springfield Masonic Lodge to Mexia forced Groesbeck Masons to petition for creation of a lodge in that area. Chartered June 14, 1872, Groesbeck Masonic Lodge 354 was constituted with twenty-four men, being the first fraternal organization in the town.⁸³ Lodges were also founded by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Knights of Honor, Ancient Order of United Workmen, and Woodmen of the World but all, except the Masonic, demised.

Removal of the county seat to Groesbeck on December 20, 1873, awakened the town. The first directory listed the following merchants: F. M. Greako, blacksmith and wagon manufacturer; Dewitt C. Underwood, news dealer, confections, and fruits; Stephens and Brown, general merchants; Mittenthal and Shapira, general merchants; A. W. Risien, undertaker, hardware, lumber, and furniture; Peyton Parker, groceries; J. D. Whitcomb, dry goods and groceries; J. T. Davis, drugs; J. Nussbaum, groceries; W. Wolf, groceries; W. R. Swaim, harness and saddle maker; Nelson House, Mrs. J. S. Nelson; Barkley House, John Barkley; Parker House, Peyton Parker; Amos A. Jayne, land agent; Farrar and Prendergast, lawyers; Clark and Key, liquor dealer; L. L. Foster, printer; F. Fritz, liquor dealer; J. W. Mitten, stables; and R. M. Fancher, James Kimbell, W. H. Frisbie, J. A. Harrington, and George Watts Walker, attorneys.⁸⁴

Many immigrants stopped at Groesbeck, and went into the country prospecting for good farming locations. An announcement was issued, stating:

... They seem to be well pleased with the country near Groesbeck as a farming country. We expect a good deal of immigration to this section this fall. They can purchase corn at 40¢ per bushel in this section.⁸⁵

English families from London started locating in Groesbeck during this time, and it was an Englishman that planted the first cotton on the blackland prairies.

⁸³Charter members of Groesbeck Masonic Lodge 354 were: J. T. Davis, J. C. Welch, Peyton Parker, J. H. Seawright, J. J. Lewis, J. A. Harris, A. B. Robertson, J. C. Anglin, M. B. Stockton, A. Horton, N. G. Hudson, J. W. Ferril, A. Anglin, W. A. Sharp, G. W. Seawright, T. H. Dennis, J. F. Lewis, William Wilson, H. W. Morgan, W. H. Cox, W. W. Orr, F. M. Bailes, J. L. Alford, and J. P. Alford.

⁸⁴*Business Directory, 1878* Evidently some merchants were overlooked. James Calvin Anglin, after three years in the livery business, erected a steam mill and gin at a cost of \$7,000; the mill and gin were built in 1874. Also, J. Castacholdt started manufacturing brick in the seventies.

⁸⁵*Examiner and Patron, August 27, 1875.*

During the eighties attempts were made to relocate the county seat. Geographical location influenced many votes, but talk of a new railroad from Waco to Rapides parish, Louisiana, via Groesbeck, brought forth many claims and counter claims as to how the project would aid the town. A letter briefly stated, ". . . It would open up direct transit from hence to New Orleans, which is, and ever has been the best cotton market in the South, furnishing eastern Texas and western Louisiana with the grain that she needs, and obtaining direct transit for coffee, sugar, molasses, rice and tobacco from lower Louisiana."⁸⁶ Even though the people pledged financial aid and support for the proposed line, the project never materialized.

Much of the progress of the town in the eighties may be attributed to M. M. McFarland, editor and publisher of the *Limestone New Era*. During his two years as editor he put the town of Groesbeck on the boom, organized a national bank, organized a board of trade, started the first good roads movement in the county and revolutionized things generally. At the time of his removal to Southwest Texas in 1889, he was a city alderman, city secretary, and secretary of the board of trade.⁸⁷

The nineties generally was one of growth and development as the blackland ranches were opened for farming. W. A. Kincaid at the opening of the Limestone County Fair said:

. . . two years ago Groesbeck had a population of 650, today there are nearly 1200 souls within her haunts. There have been erected in this time 65 substantial dwellings, 16 brick buildings and one large hotel, besides thousands of dollars of other improvements.

The total sale of merchandise amounted last year to \$495,000. Lumber 1,000,000 feet. . . .⁸⁸

During this fair, both the *Limestone New Era* and *Groesbeck Journal* issued daily editions announcing all of the previous day's activities and results as well as that day's contests.

Though schools had been established shortly after the town was founded, fifty-three people petitioned the County Judge to call an election in 1890 to decide if the town should be incorporated for school purposes.⁸⁹ L. B. Cobb ordered the election held on May 24,

⁸⁶*The Waco Day*, March 1, 1887.

⁸⁷*Kosse Cyclone*, May 30, 1918. J. T. Robison was a personal friend of M. M. McFarland, who represented the 117th District in the Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Legislatures.

⁸⁸*Limestone New Era*, December 8, 1892.

⁸⁹Petitioners for incorporation of Groesbeck for school purposes were: C. S. Cookerly, C. S. Bowdon, C. S. Bradley, W. P. Brown, Jr., J. F. Cayton, M. T. Johnson, L. B. Boyd, O. Wiley, Jr., W. T. Cox, A. L. Steele, J. F. Taylor, Wilmer

1890, with M. H. Clark as the presiding officer.⁹⁰ When the results were known, forty-three out of sixty-seven had favored corporation.⁹¹ After taking charge, suitable buildings were erected for the whites and Negroes. W. W. Wyatt was elected superintendent.⁹² Six years later, a wooden building with a heating system and desks replaced the first building. In 1910, however, the *Journal* reported:

Just as we were going to press this morning at 10 o'clock, the fire alarm sounded, summoning the citizens to the school-building, which was discovered to be on fire. School was in session, and the thought uppermost in the mind of every parent patron was to save the children. Fortunately they were all marched out of the building in safety, with the exception of Milton Bachelor, who sustained a broken arm by jumping from the second story window . . .

The fire company responded but owing to the fact that there is not a fire hydrant in 400 yards of the building no effective work could be done and the building burned to the ground in a very few minutes. The loss is estimated at \$14000 covered by insurance, but nothing the value of the building.⁹³

J. G. Denning of Mexia was awarded the contract for building the first brick building: his bid was \$24,000.⁹⁴ An annex was added in the middle twenties. Separation of the elementary and secondary schools occurred in 1936 with the erection of a high school building.

In June 1890 another petition signed by twenty citizens was presented to Judge L. B. Cobb requesting an election to decide whether or not the town should be incorporated.⁹⁵ Incorporation was overwhelmingly approved on June 30, 1890, when sixty-five out of ninety-eight favored corporation.⁹⁶ The mayor-council form of city government was adopted which has survived. Several attempts have been made to abolish the corporation but all have failed.

Cox, W. G. Rucker, S. S. Walker, W. R. Wimbish, R. Oliver, William Kennedy, Samuel Risien, F. C. Oliver, D. Oliver, W. B. Rawls, H. E. Ellis, F. B. Strayhorn, G. O. Davis, J. D. Rankin, Sr., F. M. Webster, J. D. Rankin, Jr., Lee Bennett, S. D. Walker, J. B. Tyus, Osborne Kennedy, C. E. Proctor, F. M. Corley, Mistrot Bros., Joshua Wood, W. T. Jackson, J. B. Kimbell, W. C. Morris, G. W. Lee, J. W. Stuart, S. A. Morris, A. P. Morris, J. L. Walker, M. H. Clark, J. W. Stephens, J. C. Anglin, T. K. Stroud, Nussbaum Bros., T. C. Levingston, George Fisher, and J. Weil. Petition has been lost.

⁹⁰Commissioner's Court Minutes, D, 82.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 84.

⁹²*Groesbeck News*, March 18, 1896.

⁹³*Groesbeck Journal*, January 27, 1910.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, June 9, 1910.

⁹⁵Commissioner's Court Minutes, D, 98.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 99.

Following incorporation as a town, a waterworks system was undertaken. J. H. Brewington was appointed foreman, and in December 1892 reported: "We are steadily enlarging the well, and we struck a new vein today, which I think assures plenty of water."⁹⁷ Six years later, Groesbeck got legal rights to use water from the Navasota river. In 1921, the State Board of Water Engineers granted a permit for 2,500 acre-feet of floodwater. While Texas was fighting legal battles for its tidelands, Groesbeck was accusing Texas of a tidelands-type grab.⁹⁸ Both eventually won their battles.

Fires took their toll of the older buildings. The most disastrous fire occurred in 1896, when a city block was destroyed. Of this fire, C. W. Cobb reported:

The quiet of mid-night slumber was harshly broken by the sharp, quick peals of the fire bell last Saturday night, when fire was discovered in the old Risien Bros. building occupied by W. S. Walter's grocery stock and the post office. A large number of willing men were soon on hand, and the fire company quickly had a stream of water playing on the fire, but the spread of the flames could not be checked until the Risien building, the Oliver buildings, the Clark building, the old Al Risien building and the S. Risien carpenter shop were entirely destroyed, and S. Risien's brick building occupied by Joe Rhea's market was damaged, and for a time it seemed that other buildings would be burned. . . .⁹⁹

An excellent fire department was founded which prevented wholesale destruction of other city blocks.

An electric light plant was built by Zeph and James Calvin Anglin in 1900, and their early contracts permitted "all the electricity you wanted for \$10.00 per month."¹⁰⁰ The company agreed to furnish electric lights for the courthouse and jail, but the court refused to accept their offer until they agreed to wire the courthouse and jail free of charge and keep all lamps in thorough repair. E. D. Broadhead was granted a franchise to construct and operate an electric light and power plant.¹⁰¹ The plant was eventually sold to the Central Texas Ice, Light and Water Company, predecessor to Southwestern Electric Service Company.

Civic organizations had their beginnings early. In 1910, a Civic League was organized to improve the health, happiness, and beauty of the town. Next, came the Business Club which was most active;

⁹⁷Groesbeck *Daily Journal*, December 10, 1892.

⁹⁸Thomas Turner, "Groesbeck Claims State Pulling Own 'Big Grab,'" *Dallas Morning News*, September 7, 1954.

⁹⁹*Limestone New Era*, September 2, 1896.

¹⁰⁰Commissioner's Court Minutes, E, 326.

¹⁰¹City Commission Minutes (Groesbeck), April 8, 1914.

this group sponsored a celebration upon the completion of the natural gas white way which was declared "the best natural gas system in Texas, the best rates and the best lighted business district between Dallas and Houston."¹⁰² An active Chamber of Commerce supplanted both of these earlier organizations.

During World War I, Scott Reed organized Company K, composed largely of men from Groesbeck and surrounding area. Commissioned officers were Scott Reed as captain, Garland D. Runnels as first lieutenant, and John F. Lehane, Jr., as second lieutenant; there were 140 enlisted men.¹⁰³ Assigned to the Sixth Texas Infantry, Company K saw service in Europe. Eleven draftees left Groesbeck on September 6, 1917, the first of Limestone's selective draft.¹⁰⁴ The war effort was aided by the organization of a Red Cross chapter by Mrs. J. Cull Sanders.¹⁰⁵

Many changes have taken place in Groesbeck since its founding in 1871. It has a romantic past of which little is known.

Mexia

Pedro Varela sold his eleven-league grant to Carlotta Walker, wife of General Jose Antonio Mexia. The purchase was made for her minor daughter, Adelaide Matilda Mexia. In 1836 General José Mexia sold the land to John A. Merle, supposedly to keep creditors from seizing it. Following the death of Antonio Blandin, Merle declared he had used his funds to purchase the land. A controversy over the ownership of the Varela grant developed, the question being whether Adelaide Matilda Mexia owned the land in her own right or whether Nathaniel Hoyt and James Blandin, administrators of the Antonio Blandin estate, owned the same by descent. The dispute was carried to the Supreme Court of the United States, and the case was decided in favor of Adelaide Matilda Mexia.¹⁰⁶

Before the controversy was settled, Adelaide married George Luis Hammeken. Hammeken had already acquired control of the Andres Varela, Manuel Crescencio Rejon, and Juan Nepomuceno Acosta grants; the Andres Varela grant was transferred to William Christy and Charles A. Jacobs for \$14,612.¹⁰⁷ Enrique Mexia, brother of Adelaide, had received the Palacios grant from his Godfather, Mariano

¹⁰²Groesbeck *Journal*, June 11, 1914.

¹⁰³Roster, Company K, Sixth Texas Infantry.

¹⁰⁴Groesbeck *Journal*, September 6, 1917. The eleven draftees were: Pink Allison Bates, Jacob Isaac Curry, W. W. Gray, Sidney B. Gidden, Homer J. Rasco, Charles M. Browder, James L. Hearne, George Hadden Carter, John S. Moody, Fritz Radle, and Johnnie C. Jensen.

¹⁰⁵Personal papers of Mrs. J. Cull Stroud.

¹⁰⁶Limestone County Deeds, 206, 366-370.

¹⁰⁷Sale of Lands to William Christy and Charles A. Jacobs (Contract), June 17, 1836. MSS in possession of Ray A. Walter.

Riva Palacios.¹⁰⁸ Someone had to become overseer of the vast Mexia-Hammeken properties, and Enrique was appointed agent of the Hammekens and moved to Limestone County.

W. J. Hutchins, a trustee of the Houston and Texas Central Townsite Company, purchased 1,280 acres in the Pedro Varela survey on October 26, 1870.¹⁰⁹ Five days later he purchased an additional 640 acres.¹¹⁰ A town was laid out in 1870, in a plat regular in form about the depot grounds, and named Mexia, in honor of Enrique Antonio Guillermo Mexia.¹¹¹

Both E. A. Mexia and George Luis Hammeken built homes in the town. Hammeken preferred Mexico City to this area and removed there at an early date. Mexia, too, had other interests and finally decided to dispose of his house. Following the death of Adelaide, all of the Hammeken's personal effects were sold. In 1882, Hiram M. Roberts purchased the residence and premises of Mexio.¹¹² While a resident of Mexia, the "General's" only son, Clarence William Mexia married Mary Demming; the ceremony was performed by Richard H. H. Burnette, Methodist minister, on September 9, 1879.¹¹³

As early as July 1871 people were purchasing property in the town, though it was not until September 23, 1871, that the trustees dedicated the town of Mexia, reserving the depot and station lands for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad.¹¹⁴ Declaration of martial law hampered growth in 1871, but in January lots began selling at a rapid rate. Among the early purchasers were E. L. and H. B. Carpenter, J. J. Kerley, B. W. Jackson, R. D. Kennedy, A. Demming, J. C. Yarbro, M. A. Johnson, T. H. Robertson, J. W. Simmons, J. C. Wayland, J. B. Johnson, M. W. Kemp, and J. H. McCain.¹¹⁵

Building began at the corner of Commerce and Sherman streets. First business building was the Southern Hotel built by J. C. Yarbro.¹¹⁶ Other buildings were erected by Leonard Daniels, J. C. Wayland, John Kerley, G. G. Towles, and others. These earliest buildings were of wood, and in 1873 William Kamsler and Brother built the first

¹⁰⁸Limestone County Deeds, 19, 638-640.

¹⁰⁹Limestone County Deeds, C, 188-190.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, C, 190-192.

¹¹¹Enrique Antonio Guillermo Mexia, Henry A. Mexia, H. A. Mejia, A. G. Mexia, and Henry Tony William Mexia are a few of the names "General" Mexia used. His christened name was Enrique Antonio Guillermo Mexia. He died in Mexico City, Mexico, on September 19, 1896, at the age of 64. George Luis Hammeken died in Mexico City, Mexico, on January 22, 1881.

¹¹²Mexia Weekly Ledger, March 3, 1882.

¹¹³Limestone County Marriage Licenses, B, 336.

¹¹⁴Limestone County Deeds, C, 179-180.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, A, 246, 436; B, 130, 237, 380, 508, 517; E, 612; G, 615; H, 33; I, 186; M, 413; P, 421; T, 99.

¹¹⁶Mexia Weekly Herald, May 14, 1883.

brick building.¹¹⁷ When J. A. Arvin arrived in the town there were six business establishments, about two hundred people, and several residences; Arvin was the first photographer.¹¹⁸

Soon after James N. Barthalow was appointed postmaster in March 1872,¹¹⁹ people who had moved from Fairfield demanded that Jacob Willis Fishburn move the *Ledger*. Finally, acquiescing to their demands the Mexia *Ledger* began publication, the first newspaper in the town. Six years later, the *Texas Observer* was founded, followed by the *Democrat*, owned by A. M. Kennedy. The Alliance was very strong and their views were expressed in the *Herald-Echo*, edited by Marion Drinkard. In 1892 William Elliott Doyle founded the *Banner*, and after three months publication consolidated with the *Democrat* to form the *Banner-Democrat*. Many other newspapers such as the *Trade Journal*, *Courier*, *Eagle*, *Bi-Metalist*, *Texas Monthly*, *National Banner*, *Telegram*, and *Enterprise* were established, but suspended publication after several issues appeared. A daily was begun in the middle nineties when the *Ledger* started printing an evening edition; eventually N. P. Houx acquired the daily, formed a company, and since that time the Mexia *Daily News* and its several forerunners have been published.¹²⁰

Development of a city government began on April 7, 1873, when the legislature enacted a law incorporating the town.¹²¹ J. C. Yarbro was elected mayor, and plans formulated for making Mexia the metropolis of Central Texas. Progressive citizens worked diligently

¹¹⁷Henry Kamsler was associated with his brother in the operation of William Kamsler and Brother. It was the first Mexia store to have a New York office.

¹¹⁸Memorial History, 363.

¹¹⁹Postmasters at Mexia were:

James N. Barthalow	March 1, 1872
James B. Simons	October 21, 1872
Harry J. Foy	November 26, 1872
James B. Simons	December 20, 1872
John S. Abernathy	December 29, 1873
James A. Nelms	November 30, 1875
R. W. Walton	February 8, 1876
Charles F. Cooper	March 20, 1876
Hiram M. Roberts	March 30, 1876
Henry H. Andrews	March 22, 1882
Joshua A. Gardiner	August 9, 1883
Samuel A. Fishburn	December 21, 1887
James R. Neece	April 16, 1889
Newton E. Meador	June 26, 1893
James R. Neece	September 14, 1897
Philpott Karner	March 2, 1905
Isidore Newman	April 20, 1909
Billie W. Simmons	May 22, 1913
Isidore Newman	November 4, 1921

¹²⁰Ray A. Walter, *Checklist of Known Publications, Limestone County, Texas*.

¹²¹Charter of the City of Mexia, 1-4.

to improve the town which became known for its many "firsts" in the county. The oil boom of the twenties brought many new problems, and on July 7, 1924, people approved a new charter for the city of Mexia. Adoption of the city manager system was most advantageous, for Mexia was able to secure the services of an efficient, hard-working man who fostered many of the post-boom ideas; Howard Mace liked the town and refused to join the exodus, preferring his position.

Mexia was the home of the first bank in the county. Early in the seventies Thomas J. Oliver and W. H. Richardson organized the Oliver and Richardson Company. As early as March 1872 John R. Henry, one of the wealthiest men in the county, deposited several thousand dollars with the company.¹²² Richardson became more interested in his dry goods store, relinquished his rights to W. L. Griggs, and Oliver and Griggs was established.¹²³ Oliver and Griggs moved to Dallas in 1882, and Davis M. Prendergast, L. P. and J. L. Smith, J. W. Blake, and W. B. Gibbs established Prendergast, Smith and Company which served the area more than sixty years. Following the success of these organizations, other banks began to appear.

Mexia's first directory lists the following merchants: M. Adams, hardware; James A. Arvin, photographer; John J. Beckham, general merchant; Bessing and Roller, grocers; T. M. Bloom, saloon; Corley Brothers, furniture and undertakers; E. C. Daniels, furniture; J. M. Day, jeweler; A. Eisenberg, restaurant; C. H. Elliott, carpenter and builder; J. W. Fishburn, publisher; J. A. Gardiner and Company (an associate of Padgett Brothers), saddlery; John A. Granberry, shoemaker; Griggs and Andrews, machinery; Hanson and Sorenson, groceries and bakers; J. Henderson, tailor; John R. Henry, capitalist; Jackson and Robertson, general merchant; J. R. Johnson, blacksmith; I. Kamsler, saloon; Kamsler and Brother, dry goods; Katten and Simons, groceries and fruits; Mack W. Kemp, drugs; M. A. King, general merchant; James Kirksey, drugs; Joseph Lipari, saloon; M. L. McDonald, carpenter; Mrs. H. McKay, hotel; D. B. Machon, blacksmith; Co-operative Association, W. A. Parker, manager, groceries; W. P. Mosely, books; Mosely Brothers, general merchant; H. M. Munger, mill and lumber; R. S. Munger, mill and gin; Joseph Nussbaum, groceries; Oliver and Griggs, bankers; Wade A. Parker, groceries; Fred Pottgen, bakery; Mrs. I. L. Pottgen, millinery; L. B. Reedy, gunsmith; W. H. Richardson, general merchant; M. H. Rowland, hardware; Roddy Smith, saloon; J. C. Smith and Brother, general store; J. L. and L. P. Smith, general store; F. Stern, bookmaker; J. W. Storey, hardware; Storey and Roberts, general store; Street and Street, drugs; T. W. Wade and Company, dry goods and groceries; Charles Lewis Watson and Brother, general store; and F. Weis and

¹²²"Day Journal of John R. Henry," MSS in possession of W. E. Henry.

¹²³*Ibid.* and letterheads in possession of Ray A. Walter.

Company, dry goods and notions.¹²⁴ In 1880 the population was estimated to be 1800; listed also were seventy-six business houses, six lawyers, four physicians, two dentists, three preachers, two schools, and five fraternal organizations.¹²⁵

Mexia has been the home of many distinguished citizens. One of the first to become prominent was H. M. Munger.¹²⁶ Henry Martin Munger was born in Colchester, Connecticut, on June 7, 1825. Following his journey to California, he returned to Texas and married Jane Catherine McNutt on October 23, 1851. When the Houston and Texas Central Railroad started building northward, Munger built lumber yards in the terminal towns and contracted to build the depot and other buildings for the company. Moving continuously until reaching Mexia, he decided to settle permanently there. In addition to the lumber business, a saw mill and cotton gin was added to the Munger enterprises. Stephen I. Munger was given control of the lumber yards and Robert obtained the cotton gin.

Robert Sylvester Munger attended Trinity University at Tehuacana, but before graduation was placed in charge of the cotton gin. Noticing dust as cotton was carried to gins in baskets, he determined to study the situation and find a solution to the problem. Finally a suction pipe to carry the cotton to and from the gins as well as three gin stands instead of the required eighteen was a result of the careful study of Robert Munger. This invention brought him to the forefront as a pioneer in the improvement of ginning machinery in the United States.¹²⁷

As the ginning business developed, a brick gin with the inside finished with mahogany was built at Mexia. Upon completion as a model, it became known as a show place to the cotton ginning industry, and rightly so for it was the finest and largest gin in the world at that time. Munger Oil and Cotton Company acquired a string of gins in Limestone and Freestone counties, became owners of the oil mills at Mexia and Teague, and one of the largest producers of cotton seed products.¹²⁸

Another progressive citizen of Mexia was Joseph Nussbaum, more familiarly known as Joe. Born in Germany on August 6, 1848, Joseph

¹²⁴"Directory" pages pasted on sheet and mailed to Roscoe Wiley.

¹²⁵Maggie Abercrombie, *History of Limestone County*, 96.

¹²⁶Henry Martin Munger died July 4, 1899. His wife, Jane Catherine McNutt Munger was born in Tennessee on January 16, 1832; she died October 29, 1902. Both are buried in the Mexia City Cemetery.

¹²⁷The writer is grateful to Carrie Munger Long and Lillo S. Munger for the material on the Munger family.

¹²⁸Robert Sylvester Munger was born at Rutersville, Texas, on July 24, 1854. He died at Birmingham, Alabama on April 20, 1923. He married Mary Collett on May 2, 1878. She was the daughter of J. H. Collett, who lived in Limestone County before the Civil War.

Nussbaum migrated to the United States in 1866 and three years later settled in Limestone county where he built general mercantile stores and engaged in the land business, buying large tracts of undeveloped land which he subdivided and sold to farmers. His imprint will long be felt in Mexia, for he founded the First National Bank, built the first ice plant, opera house, telephone plant, electric light plant, and compress.

Some insight into the early days of Mexia have been recorded by Blanche McCain Rimassa who recalled:

Mexia had three saloons as I remember, The Red Front, next door to Corley Brothers, Lewis' downstairs in the Old Opera House, and the Rail-Road Saloon back of the Wagner and Rimassa building, facing the depot ...

There was drinking and gambling—everything was wide open, day and night and Sunday too. There was quite a bit of fighting and occasionally a killing—not a murder—there were runaway teams—about the usual number of casualties to be expected under these conditions in a town of that size and time.

The boys and men on the farms and ranches and surrounding settlements came to town on Saturday afternoon, just as they do today. But about 8 o'clock at night these visitors would begin to leave for home, not only feeling their oats but often their corn and rye as well. Now these old country boys who would not have harmed a human nor hurt a kitten would jog along to the edge of town, then spur their horses, yell and whoop like wild men and begin shooting at the stars.

No home in Mexia showed a light Saturday night for a lighted candle or coal oil lamp looked too much like a star to take the risk.¹²⁹

Mexia took control of her schools in the early eighties and then embarked on the establishment of a waterworks system. A twenty-five-acre artificial lake was built as well as a standpipe. In 1892 the town boasted of sixteen hydrants and five miles of mains.¹³⁰ The privately owned fire department came under control of the city in 1879 which, at that time, was composed of a hose and hook-and-ladder company. Civic pride bolstered by the oil boom saw Mexia enlarge and improve her waterworks and fire department.

Completion of the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railroad from Hubbard to Mexia in 1903 brought a period of prosperity by making the

¹²⁹Blanche McCain Rimassa, "Good But Expensive," MSS in possession of Blanche McCain Rimassa.

¹³⁰Memorial History, 363.

town a center of a cotton-growing area. It was at this time the Gibbs Memorial Library had its inception. Established by the Woman's Friday Club, all work was under the direction of club members. A brick building was erected in 1923, and Mrs. Charles Alderman was appointed the first librarian. Known for years as the Mexia Public Library, a gift from the Jesse Jones Foundation made possible the erection of a new building. The name was changed to Gibbs Memorial Library to honor Dr. Jasper Gibbs, early resident and father of Mrs. Jesse Jones.

Mexia Gas and Oil Company was launched in 1912 with the following incorporators: Julius Nussbaum, Blake Smith, Julius Desenberg, J. Sandford Smith, Dr. R. B. Jackson, J. A. Wright, and Roscoe Cook. This enterprise survived only a few months as dissolution papers were filed in December. A reorganization took place, and papers were filed with a modified slate of officers: Julius Nussbaum, president; Blake Smith, vice-president; Julius Desenberg, secretary-treasurer; William Langley Murphy, Dr. F. P. Peyton, R. J. Jackson, and W. M. White as directors.¹³¹

Ten dry holes were drilled without finding but traces of gas. Luckily, the eleventh test was completed as a commercial gasser. Mains were laid to all parts of Mexia and the company began supplying natural gas for heating and cooking purposes. Spurred to new efforts, thirty-two of the largest gas wells of the Southwest were brought in within a two-year period, and natural gas was supplied to surrounding towns.

Total oil production before 1920 was less than 500,000 barrels.¹³² Experimental drilling began after the discovery of a small producer on the Rogers tract. On August 21, 1921, the Western Oil Corporation's No. 1 Desenberg spouted, from a depth of 3,059 feet. This gusher produced 18,000 barrels a day, and the same day a 24,000-barrel gusher blew in.¹³³ Mexia immediately became a boom city. Its population soared from 3,482 to nearly 35,000. A communiqué issued by the Chamber of Commerce stated that Mexia had thirty-two lumber yards, thirty supply houses, four wholesale grocery companies, several hospitals, and payrolls amounting to more than \$400,000 a week.¹³⁴

Mexia citizens had enough foresight to escape the many evils that could have resulted from the boom period. A new high school building was completed, thirty-eight miles of streets paved, a new city hall and library erected, and an adequate water and sewage system in-

¹³¹ Mexia *Evening News*, November 24, 1920.

¹³² *Handbook of Texas*, II, 182-183.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Nanine Simmons, *Booming Mexia in the Roaring 20's*, published in the Waco *Times-Herald* from February 9, 1955 to March 8, 1955, and later printed in booklet form, contains a wealth of information on the boom period.

stalled. Valuations have remained constant but the assessed rates have decreased.

Establishment of a prisoner of war camp near Mexia in 1942 led to the establishment of the Mexia State School and Home after the war. An institution for the mentally deficient and mentally ill, it is today one of the greatest assets to Limestone County. More than 500 people are employed at the school. Vernon Jones is the superintendent of this ever expanding institution.

Among the industries of Mexia are the Mexia Textile Mills, makers of fine duck and osnaburg from cotton; Swift and Company's cotton-seed oil mill and gin; Mexia Metal Works, makers of steel gates, cattle guards, stock feeding bins, and such other items from steel; Coca-Cola Bottling Company plant; Williams Tool Company, making oil well tubing rotators; Ingram Planing Mill, makers of sucker rod guides from hickory wood; the News Publishing Company, printers; and Futorian Company, furniture manufacturers.

Cargill, Incorporated, and the Harvest Queen Mill and Elevator Company have huge grain storage and handling operations at Mexia, making it one of the largest grain storage points in the nation.

Coolidge

Coolidge, in northern Limestone County, was originally known as Sandy Creek, receiving its name from the nearby creek where the first families settled. A school and church were established at an early date. In 1882, James Armour decided to lay out a town in the vicinity.¹³⁵ Sandy Creek was officially changed to Armour with the establishment of a post office on January 29, 1883, when Thomas A. Griffin was appointed postmaster. F. M. Crawford, T. A. Griffin, Charlie Wood, Robert Reed, and Harve Turner were among the first business men of the town. Methodist and Baptist churches were built, and the old Sandy Creek school was changed to the Armour district school by action of the commissioner's court.

Projection of the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railroad from Hubbard to Mexia in 1903 brought Coolidge into existence. R. T. Bell sold the necessary acreage to William Malone who had been given the power of attorney to act for E. M. House, R. H. Baker, E. Sammons, and J. D. McDowell.¹³⁶ An auction was held, at which time it was reported:

The big town lot sale that occurred . . . at Coolridge (*sic*) the new town that has been established on the Texas and Brazos Valley Railroad about half way between Hubbard and Mexia, was a great success. About 1000 people were in attendance and over \$8,000 worth of property was sold.

¹³⁵Memorial History, 489.

¹³⁶Limestone County Deeds, 38, 455-458.

The promoters of the townsite company are well pleased with the success of their undertaking and there is every reason to believe that a town will soon be built up at this new station.¹⁸⁷

Merchants of Armour saw more business in the town, and moved their buildings closer to the railroad.

By 1904, merchants in the newly founded town included: Coolidge Furniture Store, J. B. Simmons as proprietor and James Clinton Byers as manager; Robert L. Reed, implements; H. H. Hill, ginner; Harve Turner, dray and hauling business; Dwain Hughes, general merchant; J. R. Ogilvie, cafe; Roberts and Lamb, tailors; Dr. J. M. Pyburn, physician; Dr. J. S. Driver, physician; Henry Still, contractor; R. P. Merrill, general merchant; D. E. Laird, general merchant; Charlie Wood, groceries; Nussbaums, general merchant; Dr. J. F. Burney, physician; Robbins Brothers, blacksmiths; Dr. Williamson, physician; Prince and Sellers, barber shop; Walker Hotel; Wood Brothers, groceries; Argin Hancock, drugs; Coolidge *Herald*, Brown, publisher and editor; L. A. Adams, groceries; J. E. McElroy, R. T. Bell, and others. On December 29, 1903, a month after the town was founded, John R. Wallace, J. E. Jensen, W. J. Wallace, R. T. Bell, and J. H. Butler applied for a bank charter which was granted, and the following June, the First National Bank of Coolidge was opened. L. A. Adams was the first depositor.¹⁸⁸

Coolidge was incorporated for school purposes in 1904, and the following April 19, 1905, the city of Coolidge was incorporated.¹⁸⁹ First city officers included R. T. Bell as mayor, Ben L. Prince as secretary and treasurer, C. E. Prince as tax assessor and collector, and R. L. Lamb as marshal.¹⁹⁰ Following organization of the city council, ordinances were drafted by Bell, Ben L. Prince, and R. L. Reed. A. J. Gordon was appointed to name the streets where needed and Dr. J. Fain Moore was elected city health officer.¹⁹¹

The post office was moved from Armour to Coolidge in October 1903. Confusion resulted as the department listed the town as Cooledge, spelling the name with an e instead of an i; however, on January 1, 1931, the post office department official changed the spelling to include

¹⁸⁷Waco *Times-Herald*, November 19, 1903. Those purchasing lots on November 18, 1903, included: S. T. Dyer, C. J. Kauhl, J. W. Morgan, A. J. Hancock, C. E. Prince, W. J. Johnson, J. E. Griffis, John O. Hornbeck, Dannie Miller, H. H. Hill, Tom Gilbert, G. T. Johnson, C. M. Wood, E. B. Hammond and John Kelly, J. D. Frazier, W. Baldridge, J. T. Lee and Walter Davis, Phil Karner, J. I. Robbins, and J. J. Chandler.

¹⁸⁸Coolidge *Herald*, June 11, 1954.

¹⁸⁹Coolidge City Council Minutes.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁹¹*Ibid.*

an *i* thus honoring, at long last, Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, for whom the town was named. John M. Hill was appointed postmaster in October, a month before town lots were sold at auction.

Fraternal organizations overlooked northern Limestone county until December 6, 1895, when a charter was issued to Armour Masonic Lodge 780.¹⁴² Many members moved to Coolidge after that town was established, and it was not long before the lodge moved too. Following entry of the Masons, other lodges were established but demised within a short time.

Abandonment of the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railroad in 1942 was a blow to Coolidge. Citizens refused to let the town fold, and by careful and progressive planning survived. In 1950, the town reported forty-seven business establishments and a population of 1,062.

Other Settlements

Known as a county of small towns, more than 130 different communities have existed at various times. Opening of small black-land farms brought a period of prosperity. Schools and churches were built, and community life centered around these institutions. Many factors contributed to these communities' downfall. Slowly, a large majority faded from existence.¹⁴³

Ben Hur is located eleven miles northwest of Groesbeck. People began settling in the area when Joseph Nussbaum started selling small tracts to farmers. A. T. Derden named the village in honor of Lew Wallace's book, *Ben Hur*. A post office was established in 1895; the first postmaster was James A. Parker. On December 14, 1895, citizens approved the district system, and erected a school building. In 1900, a population of 127, several business establishments, and a school made up the village. The school was consolidated with Mart in 1957, but the village still has a gin, three churches, two stores, and an estimated population of ninety.

Big Hill, located seven miles west of Thornton, was named for the highest elevation in the area used for a lookout point. Settlements began in the eighties. A post office was established in 1894 when Bailey A. Garrett was appointed postmaster. On February 29, 1896, citizens approved the school district; it was consolidated with Groesbeck at a later date. It is now a ghost town with only a church and cemetery remaining to mark this once thriving community.

Billington, six miles northwest of Prairie Hill, was named in honor

¹⁴²Charter members of Armour Masonic Lodge are R. S. Barber, James McCorkle, Bennett Hodges, James M. Holley, T. N. Ganey, James Armour, E. B. Wood, W. A. Davis, W. E. Linley, L. A. Johnson, A. J. French, N. P. Willis, T. B. Mills, Elias East, Sheard Hodges, A. A. Dunwoody, B. A. Robbins, J. H. Bull, B. E. Houston, J. L. Taylor, W. J. Morgan, Frank Smith, T. M. David, and N. B. Hutchison.

¹⁴³A list of all known settlements appears in the Appendix.

of Ezekiel J. Billington. The area was first settled in the fifties. Among the first businesses was a general merchandise store, owned and operated by Alexander R. Boyd. A gin, school, church, and other business establishments made up the village at the turn of the century. Ezekiel Billington served as the first postmaster and preacher. A cemetery and church mark this once famous spot.

Box Church was originally known as Hog Range. It is situated four miles south of Groesbeck, and was named for a church established in the community in the nineties. Woodmen lodge, blacksmith shops, mercantile stores, a school, and churches made up the village in the early years. According to the last census, the village had one store and an estimated population of fifty.

Callina, four miles west of Coolidge, was settled in the early nineties. A general mercantile store was built in the middle nineties, owned and operated by Jesse Q. Rich. The commissioner's court created a school district in 1904. Among the early settlers were R. L. Wallace, W. C. McClinton, J. A. Wallace, Dwain Hughes, and John M. Carson. Nothing remains of this village except a small cemetery.

Coal, nine miles east of Kosse, was named for the lignite coal which abounds in the area. A post office was established in 1898 with John Spencer Powell as the first postmaster. The village was gradually abandoned, and nothing remains to mark this spot but the coal beds.

Coit, six miles northwest of Kosse, was the center of a large farming area. A post office was established in 1898, and William J. McAllister was the first and only postmaster. W. J. Steele operated a gin in the community for several years. The village was never large, and in 1955 a store and fifteen persons made up the community.

Condor, four miles north of Coolidge, was settled in the late nineties. George A. Johnson is credited with building the first store, and in 1899 was appointed postmaster. When the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railroad built its line from Hubbard to Mexia, it traversed the Henry Martin Munger farms. A station stop on the farm resulted in the community of Munger. William H. Ellington was appointed postmaster, and many state that Condor was the original name of Munger. Munger is, today, a ghost town.

Doyle, originally called Shady Grove, is situated five miles north of Groesbeck. Doyle was named in honor of William Elliott Doyle, a prominent attorney, editor, and mayor of Mexia. Joseph B. Dixon was appointed postmaster in 1903, and at that time the community changed its name. Two stores, a church, and an estimated population made up the village in 1955.

Datura is located three miles south of Coolidge. A village was established at the turn of the century when the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railroad made the location a shipping point. Datura became a post office in 1899 when Arthur C. Bayless was appointed postmaster. An elementary school was established at an early date, but

later abandoned. The village has vanished, and nothing remains to mark the spot.

Delia was named in honor of Delia C. Copeland (Mrs. W. P. Alexander). Located four miles northeast of Prairie Hill, the area was settled in the 1890's, and became a post office in 1895. James D. Thompson was the first postmaster. A school district was created in 1900, and in 1947 a school, two churches, three businesses, and a population of 100 made up the village. Eight years later, there were no businesses, only one church, and an estimated population of forty in the village.

Farrar is located eighteen miles south of Mexia, and was named to honor Lochlin Johnson Farrar. The area was settled in the 1850's, but a village did not develop until thirty years later. The first known business was a general mercantile store, owned and operated by John Bishop. A post office was established in 1883 when John Bishop was appointed postmaster. Professor Swaim was the first teacher.

Frosa is located fourteen miles northwest of Groesbeck. It is reportedly named for Jose Frosa, one of the early settlers in the area. Frederick P. Morey was appointed postmaster in 1877, and the village contained two churches, a gin, school, and several businesses. Among the early settlers were Jacob Cozby, Nelson Allen, Thomas Jarrard, Joseph Ratcliff, Isaac Lenoir, and William W. Cotton. A store and church mark the spot today.

Kirk, originally called Elm Grove, was settled in the 1880's. Annie and William Jacobs donated land for a cemetery, and sold lots to the Methodist and Baptist churches. A village developed. The first store was operated by Jepitha N. Kirk who gave his name to the village when the post office was established in 1887; William Hume McKnight was the first postmaster. Business establishments were operated by Benjamin F. Wheelis, William Batchelor, and the Thetfords. In 1955 one business and a population of forty were reported.

Oletha is located twelve miles from Thornton. Settled in the 1840's by Joseph Ferguson, J. S. and W. S. McKenzie, John Sadler, Charles Roberts, W. W. Barnett, and others, the community was first known as Pottersville. Penrod and Stevenson built the first store in the area. Oletha became a post office in 1886 when Dr. William J. Wilkins was appointed postmaster. Other early businesses were operated by W. W. Barnett, P. K. McKenzie, and C. Jefferson. One store, a church, and estimated population of seventy-five make up the village.

Prairie Hill was named for the elevation rising from the prairie between Christmas Creek and the Navasota River.¹⁴⁴ Settlements were previously established at Mount Calm, Mount Antioch, Frosa, and Central Institute. Marquis Perry established the first store and when he was appointed postmaster, the post office was placed in the store. A blacksmith shop, school, church, and Masonic lodge made up the

¹⁴⁴*Handbook of Texas*, II, 405.

town in the early nineties. The post office was discontinued in 1906, and the area was served by a rural delivery from Mount Calm. However, in 1925 the office was re-established and Mattie M. Runnels appointed postmaster. The town had seven businesses and a population of 350 in 1955.

Point Enterprise is one of the most progressive communities in Limestone county. Located three miles southeast of Mexia, the area was settled at an early date. Disagreement has arisen over the naming of the community. Some persons contend a city visitor suggested the name because four points of a survey met there and it was an enterprising community; another group claim that Lizzie Robertson Herring or some members of her family suggested the name; the other group contend the community was named by William Person. Early residents were most generous. Mrs. M. A. McGee donated land for a church, Melvin Herring donated land for a cemetery, and Kit Wood donated land for a school. A village was established in 1908 when W. F. Brigance built a small store. In 1920, a grocery store was established, owned and operated by W. R. McGee who acquired the title as official greeter of the community.

Shiloh, six miles south of Mexia, was named for the Civil War battle. The area was settled immediately following the war. When a post office was established the community became known as Lo. Three years later, the name was changed to Luther, presumably to honor Luther Jernigan, an early merchant. Protests were lodged, and the community returned to its original name. Gideon Jordan was the only postmaster. John F. Allison founded the first school.

Varela, originally known as Prairie Grove, was settled by people from Alabama. Among the first settlers were A. J. and M. B. Cox, Tom Waller, Elisha Herring, E. B. Smythe, and R. W. Swaim. Prairie Grove was officially renamed Varela in 1906, to honor the Varela brothers who acquired eleven-league grants in 1830.

CHAPTER VII

The Social Development

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

Provisions in the Mexican colonization laws prohibited the organizing of any but a Catholic church in Texas. Daniel Parker, founder of the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptist Church, visited Texas, studied the laws carefully, and concluded there was nothing to prohibit the immigrating of a Protestant church into the colony. Upon his return to Illinois, he organized Pilgrim Church in Crawford County, and began the long trek to Texas with the congregation. Erection of Fort Parker established firmly the beginnings of Christian activity in the county; a large majority of the first settlers adhered to the Parker doctrine.

Before 1833 when Daniel Parker led his congregation to Texas, he had fought successfully against the cause of Baptist missions. Parker, an ordained minister in the old Baptist church, was the first man to question the mission field work; he denounced missions. Anti-missionists objected to any centralization toward church authority, opposed a paid and educated ministry, and believed missionary societies and other man-made organizations were unscriptural and did not evolve from the Bible. Later, Parker promulgated an extreme ultra-Calvinist antimission theology which he set forth in a pamphlet, "View on the Two Seeds," which give rise to the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian doctrine.¹ Briefly, the doctrine emphasized that God planted two seeds in man, one coming from Him and the other from the devil; children born of the divine seed were children of God while those born of the evil seed were the children of the devil. Parker reasoned that it was a waste of time to preach or give Bibles to the children of the devil for they reproduce only their kind. His

¹By 1845, the word Predestinarian was dropped.

predestination theory is that "the children of the devil are returned back to him in the lower forms of eternity."²

Two-Seed Baptist differed from the Primitive Baptist chiefly in the degree to which they carried their theological opinion and ecclesiastical principles. They were, however, frequently called by the same names, Primitives, Old School, and Hardshell. As distinguished from the Primitives, the Two-Seeds believe in the resurrection of the body of Christ, emphasized the doctrine of salvation by grace and not by works, and observed the ordinance of foot washing.

Therefore, almost from the beginning, the Two-Seed and Missionary Baptists clashed, leaving the area open for other protestant groups. After the winning of independence by Texas, protestantism manifested itself in great proportions.

Of protestant groups, the Methodists progressed more in this area in the early years than any other. As early as 1835 Methodist preachers were holding "revivals" in the vicinity of Fort Parker and working among the Parker settlers. The Addison family realized the importance of religion in everyday life, and Isaac S. Addison donated ten acres of land for Waugh camp-meeting ground.

The camp-meeting was a pioneer institution of the Methodist church. This type of emotional meeting appealed to the people and attendance became so large that tents, cabins, and brush arbors were found necessary to accommodate the crowd. Families traveled twenty or more miles to attend these meetings; they brought tents, food, clothing, furniture, and other necessities to make their stay enjoyable. These early settlers had more time than anything else, and seemed to delight in hearing a three-hour or longer sermon. The camp meeting offered lengthy services, usually three times a day. All preachers were advised:

Camp meetings open at 9 o'clock in the morning, proceed with a variety of services, and close at 4 or 5 in the afternoon. Sometimes they stop an hour for dinner, and sometimes not. All the exercises in all the services must be short, as long exercises are peculiarly injurious.

They usually open with a praying service for about 30 minutes. At half-past 9, preaching service. At a quarter past 10, praying service in companies. At a quarter before 11, either a preaching or a reading service. At half-past 11, praying service in companies; and so on, varying the exercise in order that the attention and energy of the people may keep rising and increasing to the last.³

²For an extended study of the doctrine see "Two Seed in the Spirit Theology" in *Religious Denominations* or Lorine Maud Scott, "Parker's Baptist Church" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago).

³*Large Hymn Book, for the use of the Primitive Methodists*, x-xi. Also, see "Notes on Camp Meetings."

Much of the history of Methodism in the area is obscure. The first mention is concerned with Nashville mission which, in 1840, embraced twelve appointments, including Timmons on the Navasota and Stroud's. Location of these points is somewhat vague though it is possible both were located in the county. The Stroud family settled in the area at an early date, and it is likely the preachers included that point in their rounds. There are indications a Timmons family lived in the southern part of the county which could well be the family included in the appointment.

Springfield Methodist Church was organized in the forties. Records concerned with organization as well as the membership roll have been lost. At the Texas Conference of 1847, Springfield made its first report since being admitted to the conference; the church reported a membership of 98 whites and 1 colored.⁴ It was placed in the Washington District so as to augment the work of the denomination.

The Methodist church was well suited to the area, and rapid growth of the denomination in the Trinity-Brazos area necessitated organization of a new district. In 1849, the Springfield District, seed germ of the future Northwest Texas Conference, was organized.⁵ Mordecai Yell was appointed presiding elder.⁶ A better choice could not have been made for Yell had entered the Tennessee Conference in 1832, migrated to Texas in 1844, and had been successively on the Washington, Rutersville, and San Antonio Districts. The country between the Brazos and Trinity was rapidly filling up, and Yell's age and experience fitted him to organize this new district. His labors were very fruitful, for the chruch grew so rapidly that new districts were formed.⁷ To aid Yell organize the district, Fabricus Reynolds was appointed to Springfield Circuit, Reuben Long to Wheelock, John W. DeVilbiss to Nashville, D. F. Wright and William G. Nelms to Red Oak Mission, and James H. Addison and M. R. T. Outlaw to Leon Mission.⁸

About the same time, Andrew Davis located at Tehuacana on account of his wife, Maria Lynn Davis. Horace Bishop related:

... he retired, expecting to re-enter the ranks in a short time. No one then thought that Mrs. Davis could live another year. But for two years he sat by and nursed her faithfully. Her health was restored, and he was re-admitted into the Texas Conference in December 1854. During his retirement he supplied the Battle Creek Circuit one year and the Spring-

⁴Macum Phelan, *A History of Early Methodism in Texas, 1817-1866*, 302.

⁵Homer S. Thrall, *A Brief History of Methodism in Texas*, 109.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Phelan, *History of Methodism in Texas*, 305.

field Circuit one year. In 1855 he was returned to the Springfield work.⁹

In all probability, Davis organized a church at Tehuacana during his location there. Between 1855 and 1866, Andrew Davis served successively at Huntsville, Cold Springs, Plantersville, Bedi, and Springfield Circuits; before he located again he served Tehuacana Mission one year and Mount Calm two years.

Of Reuben Long who assisted Yell in the organization of Springfield District, the following is known:

Doctor Reuben L. Long was a scholarly, cultured man and enjoyed people of note who visited the State, including political celebrities as well as churchmen of distinction as well as helping the needy.

At Bishop Marvin's first stay in the State, he was a guest of Dr. Long's and baptised the baby, Marvin.

Dr. Long was both a medical doctor and ordained Methodist preacher. He lived at old Springfield, half-way between Mexia and Groesbeck. He lived on a small farm at the outer edge of the town.

Dr. Long owned a drug store and preferred making his living with his medical knowledge and farm and using his church rather as something to give as a help to substitute for young preachers not only at his own church but wherever needed—which often happened at that time.

When the Houston and Texas went north it touched Mexia so Dr. Long moved his drug store as well as his home to Mexia. He was really a good missionary in helping to build the new town, helping the church work as well as the sick people.

Dr. Long drifted from Kentucky to Texas. His last move was to Mexia, Texas, in 1872. He died rather a young man, leaving his wife with eight children, when she was only thirty-six years of age. Mrs. Nancy Yell Long was a fit companion for the Doctor and helped persistently in all of his undertakings. Teaching Sunday schools, church aid, and things as they were advised for her to do.¹⁰

The Bishop at the session of the Texas Conference in 1850 appointed Pleasant M. Yell the pastor of the church at Springfield and

⁹Horace Bishop, "Andrew Davis," *The Texas Methodist Historical Quarterly*, Volume 1, No. 2, October, 1909, 112.

¹⁰Carrie Munger Long, "Doctor Reuben L. Long, Senior, and family, Mexia, Limestone County, Texas," MSS in Limestone County Collection.

reappointed Mordecai Yell the presiding elder.¹¹ After James H. Addison visited the Yells, he wrote the Bishop that Mordecia was not very happy about the appointments. He was determined not to ride circuit.

Before the conference, Mordecai had made arrangements with Billy Nelms in Leon county to erect a steam saw mill to cut pine lumber. We wanted to remain on the district and be able to attend the mill, "without interfering with his Quarterly meetings, but being confined to a circuit he could not attend to it at all."¹² Springfield Circuit was not able to pay more than \$100.00 and Yell thought that amount would starve his family. But his chief complaint was Pleasant M. Yell addressing three communications to the conference.

Garrett L. Patton temporarily replaced Mordecai Yell as presiding elder, but Yell continued to serve on the circuit. In the report for 1854, Springfield reported 305 white members, fifty colored members and five local preachers.¹³ Statistically, the church was the second largest in the district, having 177 less white members than Waxahachie; however, she reported more colored members than any other in the district.

One of the first known revivals at Springfield was held in 1856 by Reverend T. B. Buckingham who reported eighty accessions.¹⁴ Camp meetings were more prevalent than revivals, although they had the same purpose in mind. The next year, Mordecai Yell was assigned the Waco Circuit and African Mission and Homer S. Thrall, the early Methodist historian, agreed to accept the appointment as presiding elder of the Springfield District.¹⁵ Thrall decided against accepting the appointment. Oscar M. Addison was appointed presiding elder of the district and Jackson L. Crabb was assigned to the Springfield Circuit. The report for the District revealed:

	Members	Prob's	Members	Prob's	Preachers
Springfield	264	64	58	26	9
Marlin	116	21	20
Owensville	101	..	14	2	2
Centreville	100	24	20	..	1
Navasota	200	..	27	..	1
Waxahachie	221	7	39	8	5
Corsicana	150	85	30	30	3
Boonville	91	26	26	5	..

¹¹Phelan, *History of Methodism*, I, 323.

¹²Letter from James H. Addison, January 9, 1852, quoted in (Phelan, *History of Methodism in Texas*, I, 338-339).

¹³Phelan, *History of Methodism in Texas*, I, 368.

¹⁴Thrall, *A Brief History of Methodism in Texas*, 132.

¹⁵Phelan, *History of Methodism in Texas*, I, 414.

Trinity African mission
Fairfield	230	50	45	25		2
Total	1473	277	279	96		23 ¹⁶

Springfield had the distinction of having the largest church in the district.

Little is known of the church during the Civil War but it has been stated by older people that no group was more active. James G. Johnson and Lewis B. Whipple served as presiding elders during the war years and tract societies distributed literature throughout the county.

On September 26, 1866, the Northwest Texas Conference was organized and Springfield District transferred from the Texas Conference. At this conference, John Stanhope McCarver was appointed to Springfield District. He recorded:

Soon I and my dear helpmate were ready, and I held the first quarterly Conference on the District at Owenville, embracing third Sunday in October, 1866. The work was large, many difficulties compared with now—January 27, 1889, but I was blessed with health, and I think a good supply of determination. There was no District Parsonage. I on my own account bought a house in Springfield for which I was to pay \$1000—\$500 when I received possession, and \$500 in 12 months. I completed the first round by the latter part of December from Corsicana where I closed the round. I went directly to Auburn and soon was ready to move my effects to Springfield. Mrs. Swofford and Mattie determined to come to us and live with us, and this relieved our difficulty in our way, want of someone to be with wife, or to care for home when we were away. This arrangement provided for my wife's going with me which now she did whenever she chose so to do. . . . The country was just beginning to breathe freely, after a four-years struggle and much misrule and suffering incident to Civil War. Many souls were awakened, sought, and found pardon, and were "added to the church." Old registers were overhauled, and conference year closed with evident favor on the District.

Revivals were almost on every charge, and the membership was increased, and the officers and members generally co-operated cheerfully with the Pastors. . .¹⁷

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 426.

¹⁷"John Stanhope McCarver Autobiography," MSS in possession of Mrs. Eunice Swofford Sims.

When Springfield joined the Northwest Texas Conference, she still claimed the honor of being the largest church in the district; she had a membership of 308 whites, 105 colored, and nine local preachers.¹⁸ Little interest was shown in religious activities for it was recorded in the minutes:

The finances drag heavily. There is a deficiency in almost every circuit and station. There is but little interest in church property. Not one tenth of the Methodist families take the church papers. The war did much toward demoralizing the Church. Military rule operates much against religious influences, stirs up bad passions, produces disquietude and induces the people to feel the necessity to husband all their beans for personal protection.¹⁹

This was the attitude being shown toward all religious activity and the Methodist Union Church at Springfield was going "to rack."

Springfield was host to the third session of the Northwest Texas Conference which met on November 11, 1868.²⁰ The Conference was growing very rapidly, for in three years it could boast of 44 itinerant preachers, 120 local preachers, and 6,325 white members.²¹ The entire area was happy to have the conference held in their midst and the people graciously opened their homes to the delegates. John R. Henry rented the hotel at Springfield, and gave free entertainment to many preachers there besides his spacious home three miles north of Springfield.²² Three bishops attended this conference and were the guests of Joseph Booth Tyus.²³

One of the most outstanding guests who attended the conference was Andrew Davis, a pioneer preacher in this area. Although he had located in 1866, he was the last presiding elder of the Springfield District.²⁴

The large frame structure was in a very bad state of repair. Horace Bishop, who was admitted at this conference, said:

On the morning of the conference a norther had come up, and as several windowpanes had been knocked out on the north side, attempts were made to put up a stove. An ac-

¹⁸Phelan, *History of Methodism in Texas*, 490.

¹⁹John M. Barcus, "History of Northwest Texas Conference," *The Texas Methodist Historical Quarterly*, Volume I, Number 2, October, 1909, 164-165.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 166.

²¹Thrall, *History of Methodism in Texas*, 298.

²²Horace Bishop, "The Conference of 1868," *The Texas Methodist Historical Quarterly*, Volume I, No. 4, April, 1910, 293.

²³Statement of Lela Tyus Padgett.

²⁴John M. Barcus, "History of Northwest Texas Conference," *The Texas Methodist Historical Quarterly*, Volume I, No. 3, January, 1910, 223.

cident had rendered the flue useless, and the stove pipe was hastily thrust through a south window. Our Virginia Bishop was suffering from cold and imagination. He feared pneumonia, far away from Richmond, Virginia, and other railroad points. The house was full of holes.²⁵

The year 1871 opened most auspiciously for the church in Texas. Revivals and immigration were responsible for the large increase in church membership and the number of preachers. The work was well supplied with preachers, who entered upon their labors with encouraging prospects of success. But as the railroad caused Springfield to vanish, the church disappeared. The people moved their membership to the newly formed congregations in the newly founded communities.

Entry of the railroad into the county saw the formation of many new Methodist churches; congregations were formed at Kosse, Thornton, Groesbeck and Mexia. Opening of the black-land area for farming operations saw the formation of still other congregations at Kirk, Ben Hur, Horn Hill, Frosa, and other places. In 1890, the church had twenty-three organizations in the county and fifteen buildings valued at \$17,400;²⁶ supporting this was a membership of 1,519. A dense population supported the churches as illustrated by the journal of 1909:

<i>Church</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Buildings</i>	<i>Pastor</i>
Coolidge	203	1	J. B. Curry
Groesbeck	193	1	J. B. Dodson
Horn Hill	350	3	Walter Vinsant
Kirk	250	4	S. C. Baird
Mexia	410	1	J. C. Mimms
Mexia Circuit	252	4	O. B. Turner
Munger	224	2	G. M. Sawyer
Thornton	80	1	J. O. Jordan
Datura	..		H. B. Landrum
Kosse	No statistics		

²⁵Phelan, *History of Methodism in Texas*, II, 14-15.

Presiding elders of Springfield District:

1849—Mordecai Yell	1861—James G. Johnson
1850—Mordecai Yell	1862—James G. Johnson
1851—Lewis Tittle	1863—Lewis B. Whipple
1852—Garrett L. Patton	1864—Lewis B. Whipple
1853—Mordecai Yell	1865—Thomas Gilmore
1854—Mordecai Yell	1866—Thomas Gilmore
1855—Mordecai Yell	1867—John S. McCarver
1856—Mordecai Yell	1868—John S. McCarver
1857—Oscar M. Addison	1869—James Jones
1858—Oscar M. Addison	1870—Andrew Davis
1859—Oscar M. Addison	1871—Andrew Davis
1860—H. W. South	1872—Andrew Davis

²⁶Memorial History, 387.

At this time, there were twenty-three organizations listed in the Northwest Texas Conference and approximately six in the Texas Conference.²⁷

Loss of population, war economy, and other factors contributed in the closing of many churches in the area. Statistics for recent years reveal the following facts:

<i>Church</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Membership</i>
Ben Hur	Jesse Mothersbaugh	93
Coolidge	John Harper	240
Groesbeck	B. C. Huddleston	419
Mexia	Cecil M. Ellis	856
Odds	J. C. Pace	21
Prairie Hill	Dale D. Dorman	84
Tehuacana	L. W. Shivers	156
Big Hill	Ellis Holden, Jr.	46
Thornton	Ellis Holden, Jr.	119 ²⁸
Kosse	Elmer B. Mayne	120 ²⁹

Today, there are ten Methodist churches remaining in the county; the denomination has fallen from among the leader to the third largest group. It has a rich history of which to be proud and perhaps, in time, records concerning each of the old churches will be found.

The Missionary Baptists, or Southern Baptists, had a rather difficult time in establishing churches in the early years. Every time one subject was quieted, another arose. No single church group has such a romantic history as does this denomination.

Not a single Missionary Baptist church was to be found in the vast Brazos-Trinity region in 1846 when Zacharia N. Morrell accepted a commission from the Democratic Mission Board of the Southern Baptist convention to act as a missionary in this territory. When he began a tour of communities within the region, an attempt was made to plant churches. He preached at Springfield but found few Missionary Baptists. Feeling the necessity of furnishing them with the "words of the gospel" he announced he would organize a church at a later date.³⁰

Morrell undoubtedly had to contend with antimissionism, both within his own rank and that of the rival Two-Seed Baptist organization, the arch enemy of missions on the frontier. An organization of anti-missionary Baptists was located in the vicinity of Springfield, led by William P. and Malachi Dorsey. Morrell and Noah T. Byars met with them occasionally and "conferred with reference to the interests

²⁷*Journal of Northwest Texas Conference, 1909*, 33 and Appendix.

²⁸*Annual Journal of Central Texas Conference of the Methodist Church, 1958*, 214-215.

²⁹*Texas Conference Journal of the Methodist Church, 1957*, 218.

³⁰*Morrell, Flowers and Fruits*, 227.

of our Master's cause in the midst of this wide destitution."³¹ His pleas went unheeded for the pioneers such as the Anglins and Faulkenberrys professed adherence to the doctrines of the Parker or Pilgrim church.³²

Two years after Morrell's missionary work in the county, he assisted in the organization on February 18, 1848, of the Springfield Missionary Baptist Church.³³ Not only was this the first church, but could be called the Mother of all the Missionary Baptist churches in the county. The six charter members were: James W. Moore, Richard W. Swaim, A. Hill, M. Kerkendall, Sarah Townsend, Elizabeth Smith, and Mary Kerkendall.³⁴ Of these members, much credit should be given to R. W. Swaim. An immigrant from Clay County, Missouri, he settled at Springfield in 1848, and at once began work as a carpenter, erecting many of the first buildings there. He served as a deacon and clerk for twenty two years and helped to establish the church in the county.³⁵

The year 1848 was a memorable one for the Baptists. It was a year of far extended county organization of district missions. On Friday before the third Sunday in July, 1848, messengers from six churches—Leona, Society Hill, Springfield, Union Hill, Corsicana and Providence—met in convention with the Providence Church, Navorro County, to consider the propriety of organizing a new association. Noah T. Byars and Zacharia N. Morrell were the only ministers present who took part in the deliberations. Henry Hurley, an anti-missionary preacher, was present and preached but took no part in the organization.³⁶ Morrell had modified his former stand and was now praying for the Two-Seeds.

Morrell acted as moderator and Alexander Patrick was secretary. A committee, appointed the previous day, reported Articles of Faith and a Constitution, article one declaring: "The association shall be known by the name of Trinity River Baptist Association."³⁷ After the adoption of the constitution, the association was organized by electing the same moderator and secretary, appointing Noah T. Byars as corresponding secretary and C. B. Roberts as treasurer. This small group, representing six churches with a membership of about forty, meant work in the heart of a vast and destitute field. They made it known the reason for organizing; the boundary of the Union Association was so great that some of the churches could not be represented. No discordant note was sounded in this organization and they were not dissatisfied with previous organization; they wanted all the churches in some organization.

³¹*Ibid.*, 228.

³²Statements of Bessie Gresham and Zephie Anglin, grandchildren of Abram Anglin and David Faulkenberry, personal interview.

³³*Trinity River Association Minutes for 1859*, 21.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Memorial History*, 759, and *Trinity River Association Minutes*.

³⁶Morrell, *Flowers and Fruits*, 279.

³⁷*Ibid.*

A resolution was also passed setting aside Friday before the third Sunday in May, as a day of fasting and prayer to Almighty God, "that he would grant a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit to the little churches composing this body, and that he would more abundantly bless the few laborers we have among us; and that he would send forth more laborers into this part of his moral vineyard."³⁸

In the summer of 1853, Lake Creek Church was organized with fourteen members; the charter members were: Thomas F. Waller, Louisa Waller, Mary Ann Waller, Luther Wright, Ellen Wright, Riley Roland, Catharine Roland, Walter Cresson, Mrs. Walter Cresson, a Mr. and Mrs. McElroy, Drury Sanders, Roland Pair, and Joshua Chapman.³⁹ However, shortly after organization, Jacob Lee caused a schism in the church; he charged the church with heresy and the pastor with preaching against the adopted church covenant.⁴⁰ This church became known as Lost Prairie Baptist Church; it is still an organized body.

William Clark felt a need for a church in the southern part of the county and organized Salem Church at Eutaw. Six members entered the organization, namely: William Clark, Elizabeth Clark, James Tribble, Elizabeth Tribble, John Hodge, and Alcy Hodge.⁴¹ A substantial and comfortable house of worship was built and it is thought that this was the first Missionary Baptist church structure in the county.⁴²

Baptists received a great set back with the trial of Elder A. Ledbetter. The Elder, moderator of the Trinity River Association from 1850 to 1854, had served as a missionary of the Baptist State Convention. In 1854, the association was meeting with the church at Springfield and he was asked to preach a sermon which was "tinctured with apostasy."⁴³ He withdrew from the association that night, and, after the adjournment of the group, left for his home spreading the seeds of discord as he went, splitting the few Baptist congregations in the county. This was the only case of heresy reported in the Trinity River Association.

The Trinity River Association resolved to establish a male and female school, and in 1856 the male school was located at Waco with Reverend S. G. O'Brien, a former pastor at Springfield, as president.⁴⁴ Trinity River High School was the name chosen for this school, subsequently became known as Waco Classical School, the forerunner of Baylor University.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 285-286.

³⁹*Lost Prairie Baptist Church*, 1.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 2.

⁴¹*Trinity River Association Minutes for 1859*, 21.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Morrell, *Flowers and Fruits*, 278-279.

⁴⁴Mrs. Georgiana Jenkins Burleson, *The Life and Writings of Rufus C. Burleson*, 423-432.

Anti-missionary influences were felt by the organization. Prior to the entry of the railroad, the total membership never exceeded two hundred and an enrollment of eight-eight was the largest in the history of Springfield Baptist Church.⁴⁵ After 1870, the older churches were replaced by new organizations in the newer communities.

By 1856, the Missionary Baptists counted four churches in the county with a total membership of 82 persons. The record shows:

<i>Church</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Membership</i>
Springfield	J. H. Rowland	24
Lake Creek (Lost Prairie)	J. H. Rowland	19
Mount Antioch	J. W. Bowdin	22
Salem	J. W. Bowdin	17. ⁴⁶

The church was struggling for survival.

In 1855 E. J. Billington raised \$25 and purchased a log house in which to worship and on July 21, Mount Antioch Church was constituted; the charter members included Penuel Billington, Nancy Billington, Haughton Hughes, Midian Hughes, E. J. Billington, Kitty Ann Billington, and M. J. Billington.⁴⁷

Ezekiel J. Billington worked faithfully for the Baptist church, and his work is still evident in this section. Billington was born in Bedford County, Tennessee, January 11, 1826, but moved with his parents to Ballard County, Kentucky, in 1830, where he was reared. After his marriage to Kitty Ann Rasco, the couple came to Texas in 1854 and settled in the northwestern part of the county. He was instrumental in the founding of Mount Antioch Church; this church ordained him in 1862. Billington organized a church in the Frosa area, and is credited with organizing the Horn Hill Baptist Church.⁴⁸ His death on August 5, 1896, was a serious blow to the Baptist church; he was buried in the Antioch Cemetery, later changed to Billington to honor Reverend Ezekiel J. Billington.

Mount Antioch ordained several pastors. Other than E. J. Billington, it is recorded that J. J. Riddle was ordained by Mount Antioch.⁴⁹ The churches at Prairie Hill, Mount Calm, and Antioch at Billington originated here.

Another pioneer Baptist preacher of this area was G. L. Jennings. Born in Edgefield County, South Carolina, September 19, 1830, he moved to Chickasaw County, Mississippi when fourteen years of age. He was ordained September 19, 1859, and immediately entered upon pastoral duties. Arriving in Limestone County in 1875, he was prom-

⁴⁵Trinity River Association Minutes for 1865. (Comparison of minutes from 1848 to 1879.)

⁴⁶Trinity River Association Minutes for 1856.

⁴⁷Cornerstone of Mount Antioch Baptist Church.

⁴⁸J. L. Walker, *History of the Waco Baptist Association of Texas*, 239-241.

⁴⁹Ibid., 393-395.

inent in the Prairie Grove and Limestone County Association; he organized Kirk Baptist Church and pastored many churches in the county. He died November 23, 1911, and was buried in the Kirk Cemetery.⁵⁰

In 1890 the missionary Baptist Church had only eleven organizations in the county, the largest at Mexia, New Salem, Prairie Grove, and Groesbeck. However, it began a program of expansion; many revivals were held, such as:

The Penn camp meeting, near Mexia, was in good running order about ten days. The tent was delayed long over the time, and after its arrival no one seemed in a very great hurry to get it ready for operations. That, and the removal of the meeting from Springfield to three or four miles away, produced some confusion, together with district court at Groesbeck, so we did not have as large an attendance as is usual at such meeting except on Sunday. Each Sabbath there were between 4,000 to 6,000 people present. On the last Sabbath Bro. Penn sprinkled his very large congregation with baptism, in his characteristic style, and I have heard some complain that his water was too hot . . . There were 135 professions reported and quite a large majority joined the church represented. Upon the whole, it was a success. All seem to be well satisfied with the meeting, except those who do not like to hear Baptists talk about baptism. Penn and Cairns are grand men.⁵¹

Much attention was given to the rural mission field, and as a result the Baptists made great strides. It is, today, the largest denomination in the county, with the following statistics:

<i>Church</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Membership</i>
Ben Hur	Olin E. Waldrip	291
Billington		32
Bi-Stone	Forrest Wood, Jr	65
Coolidge		360
Delia	Leo H. Harras	15
Ebenezer	James Ray Cooper	120
Frosa	F. S. Nolan	57
Groesbeck	Ben Stohler	596
Horn Hill		59
Kirk		80
Kosse	Bobby G. Good	285
Mexia, Calvary	J. M. Hinton	838
Mexia, First	Dr. Edwin J. Mays	1,923

⁵⁰Ibid., 324-325. Cemetery Records in Limestone County Collection.

⁵¹Texas Baptist Herald, November 13, 1884.

Mexia, Northside	J. A. Douglas	231
New Hope	P. G. Brown	62
Oletha	Gordon Watson	94
Personville	Monroe Cox	94
Prairie Grove		35
Prairie Hill	Fred Sain	177
Prairie Point		283
Point Enterprise	Glen Walker	230
Shiloh	W. R. Dillard	161
Tehuacana	E. C. Hewitt	99
Thornton	T. E. Caldwell	193
Watt	R. W. Stratton	119
Locust Grove	Curtis T. Porter	15 ⁵²

Reverend Reuben Ewing Sanders, an old veteran and pioneer in the Cumberland Presbyterian faith has recorded "Limestone county in early days was not like it is now."⁵³ The Cotton Gin Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized in May 1848 and was the first church of that faith organized in the county although after 1850 it was included in Freestone county. In August 1848 the second church was organized at Blue Ridge, later in Falls county but at that time in Limestone county. In September 1850 Steele's Creek Church was founded, followed by the establishment of Navasota Church in the summer of 1853; M. C. Rowlan lived at Springfield and was a leader in the constituting of these churches.⁵⁴ There appears to have been no other churches of this denomination established until 1870 when the state university of the Presbyterians was located at Tehuacana.

After Trinity University was established, churches were founded successfully at Bethel, Tehuacana, Horn Hill, Mexia, Kosse, Thornton, and Groesbeck. In 1890, the Cumberland Presbyterians had eight organizations, with five buildings, valued at \$7,200; the county membership was 463.⁵⁵ Slowly, the various churches closed or united; two congregations met on January 9, 1889, and organized Pleasant Grove Church, to meet at Spencer schoolhouse. E. R. Jones was employed as pastor and W. A. Watson, J. B. Jordan, and J. D. Erskine were elected as elders. This church became known as Fairview.⁵⁶

Removal of Trinity University to Waxahachie saw a rapid decline in the number of Cumberland Presbyterian churches in the county. Today, the church at Mexia is the only one of that denomination remaining in the county.

⁵²District Fourteen Yearbook Texas 1957, "Minutes of the Limestone County Baptist Association," 81.

⁵³Memorial History, 387.

⁵⁴Jacob DeCordova, *Texas: Her Resources and Her Public Men*, 64.

⁵⁵Memorial History, 388.

⁵⁶J. H. McCoy, "History of Fairview Presbyterian Church."

Thornton was the beginning center for the Christian Church. However, the division of the Disciples of Christ over the question of instrumental music in church services and home missions resulted in the founding of the Church of Christ. Great strides have been made by the Church of Christ within the past few years and that denomination now has approximately fifteen organizations in the county. It is rapidly replacing many of the older, better known groups.

Churches of other denominations were also organized, but their development was limited. An Episcopal church was organized at Mexia and Groesbeck, but their memberships were limited; the church at Groesbeck finally disbanded leaving the one church at Mexia. The Baptist Missionary Association has founded several small churches in the county. A "Watchtower" organization has been organized in Mexia within recent years. Though never strong the Catholic church still owns lots in the towns along the railroad, but to date has established only the church at Mexia.

Immediately after the close of the Civil War, Methodist Episcopal Churches for Negroes were organized at Comanche Crossing, Sandy, Rocky Crossing, and Springfield. Later, as the Negroes spread over the county, other churches of this denomination were founded.

Negro Primitive Baptist Churches were organized at Shady Grove (Doyle), Sandy Grove, Sardis, Bethlehem, Groesbeck, Mexia, Coolidge, Webb Chapel, Calina, and Mount Gilead.

Negro Missionary Baptist churches are most numerous and outnumber other denominations in the county. Organizations are also maintained by the African Methodist Episcopal church, Church of Christ, Colored Methodist Episcopal church, Church of God in Christ, and Presbyterian church.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The educational development of the county, like the religious development, had its beginnings shortly after Texas became a state. Often, education was in the hands of religious leaders, and teaching afforded additional income for the poorly paid preachers. Each community, individual teachers, and religious leaders had to solve their educational problems. Many private schools were established; the first school in the county was founded by John Ward "in a little cedar log house about fourteen feet square with a dirt floor, and split log benches."⁵⁷ Several students attended this school.⁵⁸ This educational endeavor had the support of Silas Bates who permitted use of his old home.

Silas Bates donated land for school purposes, and in 1847 a school

⁵⁷ Steele, *History of Limestone County*, 15.

⁵⁸ Steele states the school had fourteen students. A careful check of the pupils listed reveals that some were not old enough to attend school, being only one and two years of age.

house was built by people of the area. J. H. Arnett taught one year and was replaced by Stroud Melton. Hampton Steele, recorded the following bits of information:

The school was going on when Christmas came, so we got after him (Stroud Melton) to treat us to a Christmas present. The presents those days would be striped candy. So he would not agree to treat us. At dinner time he went out from the school building down towards the spring; while he was gone we barred the door of the house, there being one large door only; so when he came back we had him shut out. We told him he had to treat or we would duck him in the branch. So we took out after him. He ran off down towards the branch and there was a little bunch of elm saplings, and some of the boys said "Go get the axe." We got the axe and we commenced to chop on the one he was up and when we would get that one cut down he would swing over and get on another one. So we kept cutting on saplings until he gave up and says, "Boys, you can duck me, come on you Jim Phifer (James H. Phifer) and Elisha Anglin, one on each side, now you must do a good job, boys." So down they went into the pool. He ducked those boys good and proper. But he sent and got the candy the next day.

The people liked him as a teacher so they kept him for another term. The old blue-backed spelling book was our main book those days. Frank Jackson and I memorized that book from beginning to end and we used to have spelling matches and I would be on one side and Frank would be on the other. I remember one time we had a spelling match and the whole school was spelled down and then Frank and I had it. The teacher skipped all about over the book to try to catch us but we never missed a word.⁵⁹

A private school was established at Tehuacana at an early date; David H. Love was probably the first teacher.⁶⁰ This school became known as Tehuacana Academy, and among its teachers were Dr. Franklin L. Yoakum, later President of Larissa College, Daniel G. Malloy, Reverend Samuel King, and Reverend R. D. King.⁶¹

Little is known of this school but it was "a local enterprise in which Bible courses were not required and denomination views not taught."⁶² An old story indicates the school closed when the students and faculty enlisted in the Confederate army.

⁵⁹Steele, *History of Limestone County*, 15-16.

⁶⁰Census Schedule of Limestone County for 1850.

⁶¹Cemetery Records in Limestone County Collection.

⁶²*Handbook of Texas*, II, 719.

Educational facilities before the war were confined to the private schools in settlements which chose to call some teacher from a distance or some teacher established one on his own initiative. Larger planters frequently sent their children away to favorite academies and colleges in Texas as well as in other states. Amaranth A. and Teresa J. Stroud, daughters of Logan A. Stroud, were the first persons from the county to attend Baylor University.⁶³

Literacy must have been exceedingly high as only 80 whites over twenty years of age were unable to read and write.⁶⁴ At the same time, the report for 1850 showed 174 pupils attending the schools in the county. Of this number, 30 pupils were shown as attending private schools and 75 enrolled in public schools.⁶⁵

Many of the earliest citizens attended Springfield College located at Springfield; it was nothing more than an academy. William L. Glass was professor of languages and his wife, Martha Jane Young Glass⁶⁶ was a teacher of music.⁶⁷ Dr. R. T. Heflin, a former editor of the *North Carolina Christian Advocate*, taught there from 1862 until the winter of 1863 when he assumed presidency of Andrew Female College at Huntsville.⁶⁸ The tuition rates was \$6.00 per month.⁶⁹ Loss of Heflin caused the school to close.

One of the early teachers in the county was Joseph H. Powell. Born in Tennessee on September 7, 1824, he was persuaded to come to Texas by his cousin, Absalom Smith. Arriving at Wheelock in 1846, he worked on a farm for a year so he could attend Professor Hannah's Private School. Powell then began teaching part-time while managing the Kellogg-Tiebout Store at Dresden. Fire destroyed the store and he decided to return to Robertson County; on his return trip he stayed overnight at Pickens McKnight's house at Eaton's Mill, and neighbors hearing a teacher was in the neighborhood persuaded him to start a school. He taught two years at Eaton's Mill. Later, Thomas Vinson persuaded him to move to Copeland Prairie. While teaching there he met Matilda Herod and they were married December 25, 1862. He continued teaching until 1868 when he decided to enter business. A family tradition is Powell taught the first session at Box Church school after the war.⁷⁰

⁶³Baylor University Catalog, 1860.

⁶⁴J. D. B. DeBow, *Statistical View of the United States*, 1850, 315.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶William L. Glass married Martha Jane Young on December 21, 1854. Robertson County Marriage Licenses.

⁶⁷Statement of Teda Kennedy Ellis. Bill in collection of Mary Wilson and Sarah McKenzie.

⁶⁸Phelan, *History of Methodism*, II, 6.

⁶⁹Receipt in possession of Mary Wilson and Sarah McKenzie. Four Stroud children: William, Joseph, Tiny, and Tandy, attended the school.

⁷⁰Statement of J. S. Powell, son of Joseph H. Powell. Joseph H. Powell died

An academy was founded at Prairie Grove in 1868 by Melvin Herring who had migrated from Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, to that area the previous year. Neighbors heard he had taught in Alabama for twelve years and felt no other person had such strong qualifications. In February a school was opened with an attendance of twenty students; he related "the schools of the community had heretofore been running about two or three months in the year, and each school had its own book and each book differed from each other, necessitating as many classes as there were scholars."⁷¹ Regular invitations were sent to parents requesting they visit the school so they could be instructed in their duties; in this way an interest in educational matters was aroused. At the end of the first year more than seventy pupils had enrolled in the school. He taught three and one-half years at the end of which he had 140 pupils enrolled; during this time a new building was erected and two assistants were employed.⁷²

Soon after the war the Cumberland Presbyterian church felt a need for an educational institution of higher learning, and appointed members from the Brazos, Colorado, and Texas synods to form a committee to consider the question. Following a meeting of the committee, a report was issued stating the proposition seemed practical for the establishment of the desired school; it was recommended that bids for the location be opened, and that no place be considered offering a bonus of less than \$25,000.⁷³ Each synod approved the report and adopted the recommendation; another joint committee was appointed to select the location and take the necessary steps for starting the institution.⁷⁴

On April 20, 1869, the committee met to give the final location site to Tehuacana; Dallas, Waxahachie, and Round Rock were considered as possible sites.⁷⁵ John Boyd offered a donation of one hundred thirty acres for a campus and 1,400 acres a short distance away, which was to be sold in twenty acre lots with the proceeds being used to erect the main building;⁷⁶ there are many reasons Tehuacana was chosen as the site for Trinity University, among them being the location of the town, the old Tehuacana Academy, and many early Presbyterian leaders chose to settle in the vicinity. A company was organized, composed of friends of the university, who bought a large tract of land near the grounds and donated fifty acres and a large frame building to the

March 11, 1912. His wife, Matilda Herod, was born September 20, 1833, and died November 10, 1900. Both were buried at Hogan Cemetery in the Box Church vicinity.

⁷¹*Memorial History*, 362.

⁷²*Ibid.*

⁷³J. J. Lane, *History of Education in Texas*, 95.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶*Memorial History*, 383.

new institution.⁷⁷ In September 1869 the school opened with five students;⁷⁸ it began to grow immediately and soon required more room. Two years later, the main building was completed at a cost of \$25,000.⁷⁹

The first board of trustees consisted of members of the Cumberland Presbyterian church: James M. Love, Davis M. Prendergast, Isaac H. Roberts, J. H. Bell, Dr. J. S. Wills, Horace A. Boyd, D. R. Oliphant, Samuel B. Campbell, and M. M. Burgess. Reverend T. B. Wilson was elected as president of the school, but before the opening of the first session, resigned the position. An attempt was made to persuade John Ballew to accept the presidency; Ballew was associated with McKenzie College for eight years, seven as principal assistant. Gertrude Parsons Ballew was offered the position of music teacher and assistant in the French and German department. However, the Ballews declined the offer. President of Chapel Hill College, W. E. Beeson, was elected president and professor of mental and moral sciences.

A better choice for president could not have been made. William E. Beeson was born in Berkeley County, Virginia, on October 21, 1822, entered the ministry at seventeen in Logan Presbytery, and graduated from Cumberland University in 1849. He taught at Bowling Green, Kentucky, until 1852 when Chapel Hill College elected him president. From 1869 until his death on September 5, 1882, Beeson was president of Trinity University, except one year when he taught theology.⁸⁰

Among the first faculty members were W. P. Gillespie, professor of languages and literature, and S. Doak Lowry, Mary Kate Gillespie, and Margaret Fleming Beeson, assistant teachers.⁸¹ Solomon Kittrell Scruggs was offered the position as professor of ancient languages but declined to accept the offer.⁸² Only the departments of literature and music were represented the first year.

More departments were added the second year. A commercial department was added; William Hudson was elected professor of penmanship, bookkeeping, and commercial law.⁸³ Other faculty members elected included D. A. Quaite as professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres,

⁷⁷"Tehuacana, Home of Westminster College, One of Texas Oldest Education Centers," *Groesbeck Journal*, May 10, 1936.

⁷⁸*Memorial History*, 383.

⁷⁹J. J. Lane, *History of Education in Texas*, 95. Cemetery Records show that James M. Love, James Hamilton Bell, Horace A. Boyd, and Samuel B. Campbell are buried at Tehuacana. Davis M. Prendergast and Isaac H. Roberts are buried at Mexia.

⁸⁰Cemetery Records in Limestone County Collection.

⁸¹J. J. Lane, *History of Education in Texas*, 95.

⁸²Letter from Mrs. W. A. Hanger, daughter of S. K. Scruggs, April 9, 1952.

⁸³J. J. Lane, *History of Education in Texas*, 95.

Mrs. E. C. Hamilton as teacher of French and calisthenics, Mrs. M. D. Cocke and Mrs. M. C. Cole as assistants in various departments.⁸⁴

Trinity's first graduating class consisted of two men, J. S. Groves and J. L. Modrall.⁸⁵ Both men entered the ministry of the Presbyterian church and were prominent in the Limestone-Freestone area.

Co-educational from the beginning, the enrollment steadily rose. Five years after opening, an enrollment of 251 mixed students were reported.⁸⁶ The main building was too small, and wings were added to give more room.⁸⁷

Davis M. Prendergast was always interested in the welfare of Trinity University, and with John Karner, T. W. Wade, and others, made it possible for that institution to maintain its excellent standing. He founded the law department, and impressed his personality upon a number of prominent men. When the school was moved to Waxahachie in 1902, it caused him much sorrow.⁸⁸ Trinity University had in Davis M. Prendergast one of its truest friends.

Accustomed as the people of Tehuacana and Limestone County were to the advantages of higher education, it was announced that any responsible body maintaining an institution of higher learning in the locality for ten years would be given a deed to the property. Westminster College, then located at Westminster in Collin County, promptly accepted the conditions and moved to Tehuacana in 1902, almost as soon as the plant was vacated.

Westminster College was opened in 1895 by James Lisbon Lawlis, a minister of the Methodist Protestant Church. After the school moved to Tehuacana, a college of arts and sciences and a school of theology were merged into one institution under the name of Westminster College. The college was successfully operated as a four year school until 1916, when it became the first officially accredited junior college in Texas.⁸⁹

On June 2, 1942, Westminster College became a junior college of Southwestern University. Nine years later Southwestern announced it was forced to give up the school because "the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools has certain endowment and financial regulations which Westminster simply could not maintain."⁹⁰ In 1950 the school was closed.

Attempts were made to reopen the old school but the odds were too great. The Congregational Methodist church started efforts to

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 95-96.

⁸⁵*Memorial History*, 383.

⁸⁶*Waco Daily Advance*, October 17, 1874.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, March 8, 1874.

⁸⁸*Mexia Weekly Herald*, March 10, 1910.

⁸⁹*Groesbeck Journal*, May 10, 1936.

⁹⁰Thomas Turner, "Old College at Tehuacana Prepares Last Graduation," *Dallas Morning News*, May 28, 1950.

move its small Dallas college to Tehuacana; it had a distinct advantage of having few colleges for its denomination, thus being assured of students who want to go to a school sponsored by their denomination.⁹¹

On March 2, 1953, the Congregation Methodist church purchased the property, at which time the Congregational Methodist Bible School merged with Westminster College, thus becoming Westminster College and Bible Institute of the Congregational Methodist Church.⁹² Under the presidency of Harold E. Pitts many improvements were made, and it appears the school will continue to make progress.

Almost synonymous with the establishment of Trinity University at Tehuacana was the attention Groesbeck people were giving to education. Early in April 1871 a mass meeting was held to discuss matters relative to education. On April 11, 1871, block 274 was deeded to the trustees which included Reverend Mordecai Yell, H. T. Wilson, M. D. Thomason, R. W. Donnell, Logan A. Stroud, James J. Lewis, and J. C. Lewis. Wealthy citizens showed an interest in the matter and proposed to take steps toward the erection of a "spacious and superior edifice for the prospective Seminary, to which has been given the name of Groesbeck College, and which is intended shall be, not only in name, but in fact, a college; ranking among the first class of literary institutions bearing that name in the South."⁹³ A building was erected and some departments were in operation by June, but the effects of martial law and reconstruction caused the school to close after a few months.

After the war private military schools were sponsored in many areas. Philosophies underlying the military schools of that day were much like those that exist today; military preparedness, patriotism, ease of discipline, rugged manhood, character building, poise, and manners are among the outcomes ascribed to the military school. Major J. H. Bishop founded Central Texas Military Institute at Honest Ridge or Central Institute, nine miles southwest of Mexia and ten miles northwest of Groesbeck.⁹⁴ Two huge buildings were built to care for the students,⁹⁵ and the campus was continually enlarged by additional purchases and gifts.⁹⁶ John Parker was the head professor of this private institution and it was from this literary perfectionist that the young men of the county received their education.⁹⁷

John Parker was a tall dignified man and quite military in looks and

⁹¹Thomas Turner, "Doors of Ghost College May be Opened Again," *Dallas Morning News*, February 22, 1953.

⁹²*Westminster College and Bible Institute Catalogue for 1953-1954.*

⁹³*The Daily Telegraph* (Houston), April 12, 1871.

⁹⁴Phelan, *History of Methodism in Texas*, II, 117.

⁹⁵Statement of Bessie Cox Stroud, personal interview.

⁹⁶Limestone County Deeds, A, 69.

⁹⁷Letter from Mary Glaze, September 13, 1951.

bearing; some thought of him as a West Pointer.⁹⁸ He had lost an arm in the war and the wound never healed. Strong in his convictions, the student body was forced to drill in exact precision as the cadence was beat by Wilmer Cox.⁹⁹

Other than Parker, faculty members included Mrs. M. B. Williams as music teacher, Mrs. J. M. Parker, and a Mrs. Kennedy. Many boarding students attended the school and lived in the barracks. Over-crowded conditions always caused several to find room and board in the neighborhood. Sol Nussbaum roomed with William Harris DeLong, one of the financiers and builders of Central Texas Military Institute.¹⁰⁰ Following loss of the barracks, the school was turned over to the community.

In 1875, the Shiloh School was organized by John F. Allison. Of organization, Allison said:

the good old school days in the community of Shiloh; . . . my memories are centered on the dear little boys and girls that were enrolled in the school; beginning with thirteen pupils the first year, and ending with seventy-five students the fourth year—at which time, I resigned, as teacher.¹⁰¹

In later life, Allison corresponded with his older students, and as a result much is known of the early years. Many interesting facts were recalled:

Irene amused herself imitating and mimicing certain persons; she always had a helper in the person of Lula Strayhorn on the playground and in the school room. Both of them were just as mischievous as it was possible for them to be; and they were always in search of something to create fun and amusement at the expense of some of their play-mates. I can see them enter the school room after the morning recess; just before time to recite their lessons in geography, with their atlases up in front of their faces, just chittering like two birds —rehearsing something that took place on the play-ground. Well, those were good old days. . .¹⁰²

Even as late as 1944 former pupils were still thanking Allison for his help:

Lula Ingram entered school after her parents moved from old Bethel community to the Shiloh community and entering the school the second year of its itinerary; and that she in this

⁹⁸Letter from Blanche McCain Rimassa, April 11, 1952.

⁹⁹Statement of Bessie Cox Stroud, personal interview.

¹⁰⁰Letter from Mary DeLong Jones, May 5, 1952.

¹⁰¹Letter from John F. Allison to Mrs. J. O. Harper, October 28, 1941.

¹⁰²John F. Allison to Sarah E. Jackson, June 1, 1944.

letter accorded to me her principal good career in life—saying I started her at the age of nine years; and trained her in such a way, that other teachers I was under afterwards, had no difficulty in continuing the progress made while under my instruction.¹⁰³

About the same time Shiloh School was organized, there were only twenty-three schools in the county.¹⁰⁴ However, an early report listed sixty-one organized and twelve unorganized school communities.¹⁰⁵

Thornton Male and Female Institute was founded in 1877 by Edward Coke Chambers.¹⁰⁶ Born in Montgomery County, North Carolina, in 1831, Chambers graduated from the University of North Carolina Davidson College; he was a member of the General Assembly of Tennessee and a lieutenant in the Confederate States of America.¹⁰⁷ He was both a physician and teacher.

The first faculty included Dr. Marie Lenore Chambers¹⁰⁸ who also was vice -president for three years, Annie Jean Campbell Chambers as matron, Dr. T. F. Driskill, and Ella Chambers as music teacher. A frame building was built to house the classrooms. Not too far away were the barracks for the young men students. Across the street was the Chamber's home, and near it were the barracks for the young ladies.¹⁰⁹

Chartered December 7, 1881, the first board of trustees included E. C. Chambers, T. F. Driskill, C. F. Cohron, T. C. Harper, B. P. Sweeney of Limestone County, I. J. Pringle and Jesse Cornelison of Falls County, Jesse McCaleb of Montgomery County, D. S. Lindsey of Navarro County, R. H. Forman of Freestone County, James Calvert of Robertson County, J. A. Abney of Williamson County, and J. B. Cunningham of Houston County.¹¹⁰ After becoming a chartered school, William Amil Bedford and Henry P. Davis received the bachelor of arts degree, the only two people to receive an advanced degree from the institution.¹¹¹

Thornton Institute became known as Thornton College to the newspapers. After receiving its charter, ten new pupils enrolled,¹¹²

¹⁰⁸John F. Allison to Mrs. J. R. Jackson, May 8, 1944.

¹⁰⁴Mexia *Weekly Ledger*, 1883. *Limestone New Era*, November 6, 1885.

¹⁰⁵Abercrombie, *History of Limestone County*, 92.

¹⁰⁶Letter from Mrs. Frank Wolfenden, August 25, 1953.

¹⁰⁷University of North Carolina Records.

¹⁰⁸Marriage License was issued to T. F. Driskill and Mollie C. Chambers, who were married September 22, 1878. Limestone Marriage Records, B, 226. After her removal to Corsicana, she preferred Dr. Marie Lenore Chambers Driskill.

¹⁰⁹Letter from Mrs. Frank Wolfenden, granddaughter of E. C. Chambers, August 25, 1953.

¹¹⁰Charter of Thornton Male and Female Institute.

¹¹¹Statement of Virginia Bedford, personal interview.

¹¹²Mexia *Weekly Ledger*, March 3, 1882.

and reported at attendance of 87 students in April 1882. In September 1882, attendance by local students was good and fourteen boarding students matriculated the first day.¹¹³ An editorial said "Thornton College was no myth but a fixed reality. The influence of the institution is reaching out. Thirty five boarders from a distance enrolled as students, and in January another reported ten additional students were expected from Montgomery county. . ."¹¹⁴ Enrollment necessitated the hiring of another teacher, and C. F. Cohron was elected.

Chambers was a Greek and Latin scholar. When diplomas were handed to the graduates nothing but Latin was used.¹¹⁵ Regular commencement exercises were held, and among the first commencement speakers was B. M. Burrows.¹¹⁶

The school progressed, and in 1884 a merger was effected with Henry P Davis' School. Following the merger more than 171 children were enrolled and it was the largest school in the county. An editorial boasted:

The buildings are large, well ventilated, seated with patent desks and contain all the apparatus necessary. Professors Chambers and Sellers are old school teachers, having spent nearly all their lives in the schoolroom. They do not believe in educating superficially, but their work shows for itself, and we feel proud of Thornton Institute. When these two men shall have passed away, coming generations will pay tribute to their memory.¹¹⁷

Henry P. Davis purchased the school on August 15, 1889,¹¹⁸ and Edward Coke Chambers temporarily retired from the teaching profession. However, he served the county as judge and had the foresight to reserve mineral rights on all county land; this reservation clause has proved most fruitful to the county within recent years. Davis operated the school two years and it finally became the property of the Thornton Independent School District.

One of the most interesting educational enterprises in the county was the Grange Co-operative Institute at Eutaw. Opening in November 1885 for a term of eight scholastic months, its faculty included W. O. Allen, Principal, Mrs. M. J. Dew, Vice-principal, Mrs. M. L. Allen, Assistant, and Miss Ella Glass, teacher of music. Its tuition rates were announced as:

¹¹³Mexia *Weekly Ledger*, September 8, 1882.

¹¹⁴Mexia *Weekly Ledger*, January 12, 1883.

¹¹⁵Statement of A. P. Ellis, personal interview.

¹¹⁶Mexia *Weekly Ledger*, June 22, 1883.

¹¹⁷Limestone *New Era*, November 6, 1885.

¹¹⁸Limestone County Deeds, Volume 4, 550-551.

3rd Grade Branches, per month per student	\$1.50
2nd Grade Branches,	2.00
1st Grade Branches,	2.50
Lessons in music,	3.00
Latin and French each	.50 ¹¹⁹

Before enrolling in the school, parents and pupils had to read:

**RULES AND REGULATIONS
for
THE GRANGE COOPERATIVE INSTITUTE**

Article 1—Teachers

Section 1st. Each teacher shall keep a daily record of attendance, deportment and scholarship, from which a report shall be made at the end of each month and a copy forwarded to parent or guardian.

Sec. 2. Teachers must be mild but firm in the exercise of discipline, resorting to corporal punishment only, when all other means to secure good order and proper attention to duties, have been exhausted.

Article 2—Pupils

Sec. 1. Pupils are required to be punctual in attendance and faithful in the discharge of their duties, preparing out of school all lessons required of them and giving constant and quiet attention to their duties while in the school room.

Sec. 2. Pupils shall not leave the school ground during recess, nor the school room during school hours, without permission from a teacher; neither shall they absent themselves from school, except for good reason, of which the teacher shall be the judge.

Sec. 3. No communication shall be held by students with each other during school exercises, by speaking, writing, or signs, except when permission is given.

Sec. 4. No communication, either verbal or written, save that prompted by bare courtesy, shall be held between the sexes whether in or out of school; and a violation of this section will subject the student to suspension, to be readmitted only, upon a public acknowledgement read before the school.

Sec. 5. No girl or young lady of school will be permitted to receive the attention of the other sex, at any time, or to attend dances, parties, etc., during the school term, except upon the special written request of parent or guardian, upon

¹¹⁹Grange Co-operative Institute Circular.

whose co-operation the teacher is mainly dependent in enforcing this regulation upon which the success of the school largely depends.

Sec. 6. No pupil shall be retained in the school whose conduct and habits are such as to be injurious to associates, or who is obstinately disobedient, quarrelous, disorderly, or who uses profane or unchaste language.

Sec. 7. Pupils who damage or deface school property, shall pay damages in full, and upon failure to comply with this regulation, will be suspended, only to be readmitted on payment of amount due.

Sec. 8. Demerits are given for the violation of the rules of school, and any pupil receiving ten demerits during one month, shall be punished or expelled, as the case may require at the option of the Principal and school trustees.

W. O. Allen, Principle
A. W. Bryant
B. F. Burns
Thomas C. Curry, Trustees¹²⁰

However, this short lived school has an interesting history and played a major part in the development of educational institutions in the county.

Mexia's first public school opened in September 1884; located on Sumpter Street the building was described as "well planned, well built, and up to date. There were five large classrooms on the first floor, and two large classrooms, two small rooms, and a good auditorium on the second floor."¹²¹ The first superintendent was General John C. Moore. Mayor W. E. Doyle, Dr. J. H. McCain, W. H. Bessling, J. W. Simmons and Elmo Ross formed the first school board. After three years, Moore left Mexia and was replaced by R. B. Cousins, later State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

A picture of the early schools was described as:

In all our school career we had none of the present day "frills," no art courses, no domestic science courses, no business courses, no music courses, no public speaking courses, no athletics, no bands, no yell leaders, no pep squads, no majorettes, no laboratories, no library, nothing but textbooks and lessons. And our social life was strictly the responsibility of the homes and the parents. But to show that all this was in keeping with the times, I may say that when three out of

¹²⁰Rules and Regulations for the Grange Co-operative Institute, in Collection of Ray A. Walter.

¹²¹Alma C. Harris, "My Recollections of the Early Mexia Schools," MSS in Limestone County Collection.

our class of eight entered the University of Texas that fall, we found no more of the educational "frills" than in the High School. . . .

A unique feature introduced by Mr. Cousins was the series of public examinations during the closing week of school each year for several years. I do not know when they were discontinued, but I participated in them first as a student, then later as a teacher. Those examinations were held in the auditorium and continued about three days. Only the grade to be examined were seated at the front facing the audience. The teacher questioned them on most of the subjects of that grade. At all the times the auditorium was filled with parents and friends.¹²²

Following Mexia's leadership, Groesbeck voted to become an independent district on May 24, 1890,¹²³ Thornton on January 20, 1891,¹²⁴ and Kosse.¹²⁵

Many community schools were established in Limestone County. The first election to decide whether they wanted the district system was held at North Rockey in 1891.¹²⁶ Following this election, others were held at Macedonia, Headsville, Point Enterprise, Shiloh, Prairie Grove, Davis Prairie, and Prairie Hill. Slowly, a majority voted to adopt the district system.

The school population of Limestone County has declined steadily. In the early 1890-1900 period there were 119 common and six independent school districts. J. R. Atkins' report for the 1913-1914 school year showed 5,368 white scholastics enrolled in seventy-one schools and 1,983 colored scholastics in twenty three schools.¹²⁷ There were 133 white and thirty colored teachers to care for the 7,351 students; each teacher had an average of forty-five students. One of the peak years was 1930 when 3,115 Negro and 7,851 white scholastics were reported. Ten years later, 2,784 Negro and 5,835 white scholastics were reported, a total decline in the ten year period of 2,165. In 1950 further losses were reported when 1,948 Negro and 3,097 white scholastics were reported. According to the current school census, there are approximately 4,000 scholastics, nine common and six independent districts.¹²⁸

¹²²*Ibid.*

¹²³Commissioner's Court Minutes, D, 82.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 137.

¹²⁵Much litigation evolved around the Kosse election. However, it became an independent district in 1891.

¹²⁶Commissioner's Court Minutes, D, 166.

¹²⁷Education Report of John R. Atkins, 1914.

¹²⁸The writer is indebted to Charles H. Laurence, County School Superintendent, for supplying the data on the school situation. Many of the school records were destroyed in the early thirties when an elected official decided to "clean house."

CHAPTER VIII

Agricultural Development

The economic interests of Limestone County have been primarily agriculture; this may be attributed to geographical location. First settlers chose the sandy prairies where corn was the main crop. The black waxy prairie was somewhat of a mystery, suitable only for stock raising. As early as 1850, only 8,638 acres were improved while 326,-374 acres were used as grazing lands. There were 279 farms which reported 603 bales of ginned cotton, 1,248 horses and mules, 13,294 meat cattle, 585 sheep, and 14,155 swine.¹ Cotton was of minor importance until the black waxy lands were opened for settlement.

Beef cattle in the early days were exceedingly cheap, selling from two to five dollars each. It cost nothing to raise these cattle, and Aaron James Burleson often remarked that people made more clear money from ranching than most other jobs. There are many accounts of these early ranchers. Thomas B. Posey sold 2,000 head of cattle to F. M. Daugherty of Cook County for \$6,000.00. B. H. Oats purchased G. N. Chaffin's herd for \$200.00. N. W. Daugherty sold his herd to W. T. Daugherty for \$200.00. The Chisum brothers also carried many cattle to the northern markets.

Many stories have been told of the round-ups, cattle drives, and brandings. R. H. Williams who arrived in Limestone County in 1879 related his story to A. M. Stewart several years ago. Recalling the drive, Williams said:

I was entering Mexia, at that time a small town with rows of frame buildings down the one street when the freight train started blowing its whistle. A stampede of the first order resulted. My expert horsemanship and knowledge of cattle prevented great damage to personal life and property. Cows sought refuge in private homes, stores and any other place

¹J. B. DeBow, *Statistical Review of the United States*, 316.

they could get in. It took several hours to round up all the cattle again.

At one place on this 200 mile trip through the wilderness we encountered a wide and swift river. Numerous attempts were made to force the cattle to swim the river. Time and time again they got the cattle to the middle of the river only to have them turn around and swim back to the starting shore. The problem was finally solved when 15 or 20 small calves were ferried across, and released on the opposite bank. Soon the whole herd was single filing across the river without further aid from the cowboys.

Water was a scarce article. One rancher had about 20 acres of corn unfenced. Asked how he kept the cattle out of the corn he replied that he had 5 good dogs who made a cattle proof fence.

Naturally a man's horse played an important part in his every day life. Horses were prized and were treated almost as an equal to the owner. Many horses knew as much about herding cattle as did the rider himself.

Every man owned at least one good six-gun and knew how to use them. No man was really dressed up unless he had his gun strapped on him.

Arriving in Kosse, R. H. Williams was impressed by the "hail fellow, well met" attitude of the merchants. He recalled that he was met by W. R. Hammond. . . . Hammond told him this was the best part of the state and invited him to settle here, advising him that he would "take care" of him.²

Limestone's potential as a fruit growing region was recognized at an early date when Robert W. Turner chose the sandy lands near Kosse to conduct his experiments. Turner, a native of Alabama, settled in the region in the sixties, and established a nursery and vineyard. Being a viticulturist, he experimented with the Malaga grape and reported: "I have for curiosity alone, been trying a few plants with my other nursery stock. These vines, after putting them out into the vineyard, I found had stood the cold weather as well as the more hardy kinds, and for three winters. The last was a trying one. I find the Malaga all right."³ Handicap to this variety was the mode of cultivation; leaves had to be clipped and no grass or other vegetation would be allowed to grow near the vine. Turner was hired to develop a vineyard for John R. Henry; the county hired him to transplant certain types of vegetation on the courthouse lawn. J. B. Link reported

²Kosse Cyclone, August 12, 1938.

³Texas Baptist Herald, March 29, 1871.

that Turner's vineyard, near Kosse, was producing some magnificent grapes.

Other than his interest in grapes, Turner became interested in bees and their use in the fruit industry. Several experiments were conducted, but results of these experiments have never been located. However, in the early eighties, Turner secured a patent for a hat to protect a person when hiving bees or sleeping where gnats or mosquitoes were annoying.⁴

One of the first peach growers in the area was W. J. Tacker. Tacker was born in 1818 in Tennessee and, like many other people seeking to improve their conditions, migrated to Texas about 1850 and settled in the Tiger Prairie-Donie vicinity. Like most of the early Texans, he had a seedling orchard and called his peach the white English. Little is known of the origin of the variety but it has been stated that the peach reproduced itself very closely from seed.

Frances Bowlen Bond introduced the peach to a nursery near the turn of the century and named it the Tacker seedling in honor of his father-in-law.

T. E. Martin recalled that as far back as he could remember everyone in the vicinity were growing this peach. The Tacker seedling has been replaced by more popular varieties but in 1901 it was considered one of the valuable cling varieties for Texas.⁵

Limestone County's most distinguished citizen was a farmer named J. W. Stubenrauch, peach breeder. Born in Bavaria, February 7, 1852, he migrated to the United States. After four years in the northern states, he came to Texas and met Robert W. Turner who persuaded him to settle in the county. In 1877 Stubenrauch purchased several acres of virgin prairie near Mexia for \$6.00 per acre. Heavy soils were considered unfit for cultivation and older citizens predicted he would starve to death. Until his death on October 5, 1938, it was his home and laboratory from which many of the great varieties emerged.

Stubenrauch planted his first orchard in 1879 after buying many peach trees of varieties other than the Spanish or Indian; on his arrival most of the orchards were made up of the Spanish peach with no varieties of Persian and Chinese blood types. His first orchard did not prove successful as he had hoped, and he reasoned that new varieties must be discovered or created if Texas was to ever have a successful peach culture. A chance seedling with superior qualities started him on his career in that direction.

Having learned budding and grafting as a youth, he took buds from seedlings, set them in mature stock, and quickly brought the new sorts

⁴Robert W. Turner moved to Bosque County in the nineties. Born in 1837 in Alabama, he moved to Limestone County at an early date. He died in 1921 at Walnut Springs, Texas.

⁵Ray A. Walter, "Noted Peach of Bi-Stone Came in from Tennessee," Mexia Daily News, June 29, 1955.

forth for comparison. Selecting the Elberta and Bell's October as parents, he united them in producing a large progeny. In the parents were combined the blood of the North China for size, Persian for taste, and Indian for hardiness and adaptation. Progeny differed from its parent varieties, some cling, some freestone, some semi-cling, some early, some late, and some in-between. After years of trial, the choice selection from this hybrid family were reduced to the following: Anna, Carman, Tena, Liberty, Frank, Barbara, and Katie.⁶

Though Stubenrauch is principally remembered for his peach breeding, few know that he was among the first irrigationists in Texas. In the late eighties or early nineties he built a storage dam to supply water to keep his orchard and truck garden in thrifty condition at all times.⁷

Crop reports from the sandy lands were made frequently. One of the earliest shows:

- R. A. Broach—corn 34 acres, average 20 bushels to the acre.
cotton 45 acres, average 800 lbs. to the acre.
oats 7 acres, average 25 bushels per acre.
- S. A. Broach—corn 25 acres, average per acre 20 bushels.
cotton 16 acres, average per acre 600 pounds.
oats 5 acres, average per acre 35 bushels.
- Church Samuels—corn 9 acres, average per acre 20 bushels.
cotton 16 acres, average 600 pounds.
oats 2½ acres, average 30 bushels.
- W. P. Cain—corn 55 acres, average 20 bushels.
cotton 50 acres, average 400 pounds.
oats 13 acres, average 50 bushels.
- William Welch—corn 20 acres, average 20 bushels.
cotton 30 acres, average 600 pounds
- John Springfield—corn 30 acres, average 15 bushels.
cotton 60 acres, 500 pounds average.
- Mrs. Curry and Price—corn 38 acres, average 8 bushels.
cotton 44 acres, average 300 pounds.
oats 5 acres, 20 bushels average.
- John Hightower—corn 25 acres, average 35 bushels.
cotton 45 acres, average 250 pounds.
oats 5 acres, average 50 bushels.
- William Burns—corn 17 acres, average 20 bushels.
oats 5 acres, average 50 bushels.
- Clark Johnston—corn, no report.
- James J. Broach—no report.

⁶Ray A. Walter, "Limestone County Grower Developed Famed Peaches," *Mexia Daily News*, June 19, 1956.

⁷Ibid.

Whitney Rodgers—corn 40 acres, average 15 bushels.
cotton 42 acres, average 400 pounds.
oats 9 acres, average 25 bushels.

W. E. Briggs—corn 35 acres, average 20 bushels.
cotton 40 acres, average 400 pounds.

H. H. Hobbs—corn 18 acres, average 15 bushels.
cotton 25 acres, average 400 pounds.
oats 7 acres, average 30 bushels.

L. M. Briggs—corn 35 acres, average 20 bushels.
cotton 55 acres, average 500 pounds.

John Thomson—corn 15 acres, average 15 bushels.
cotton 20 acres, average 400 pounds.
oats 3 acres, average 15 bushels.

Z. H. Adams—corn 20 acres, average 25 bushels.
cotton 14 acres, average 300 pounds.
oats 10 acres, average 40 bushels

William Coker—no report.⁸

Briefly, this report includes all farms in the southern part of the county.

John B. Reilly settled in the county in 1880, and became interested in the sheep industry. In 1883, he was instrumental in organizing the Limestone County Wool Growers' Association which had as its object the advancement of the interests of the wool growers of Limestone County financially and otherwise, the protection of the wool growers interests, and extending to the wool growers general information upon the state of the market on wool, mutton and stock sheep.⁹

Officers of the Wool Growers' Association were J. W. Moore as president; E. B. Smyth as vice-president, J. B. Reilly as secretary and treasurer. J. W. Moore, E. B. Smyth, and H. S. Renick were representatives to the State Wool Growers' Association. The larger sheep ranchers included Clark Cobb with 350 head, T. H. Wilie with 800, E. B. Smyth with 470, Oliver Brothers with 800, J. M. and D. H. Love with 1150, and John Seawright with 250.

Black waxy land was relatively cheap. John L. Griffis paid \$3.75 per acre for 320 acres in the Kirk vicinity. R. H. Swaim paid \$2.50 per acre for 320 acres in the Victoria area. James Hardy paid \$3.00 per acre. Thomas B. Posey had to pay \$20 per acre for land in the sandy area but only \$1.00 per acre for land in the black waxy prairie.

First man to raise a crop on the black land of Limestone County was an Englishman by the name of Charles Smith. On October 28, 1884, Jonas Dudley Whitcomb sold Smith a forty acre tract near Big

⁸"Crop Report," MSS in possession of Ray A. Walter. This report was made in the late sixties or early seventies.

⁹*Mexia Weekly Ledger*, May 4, 1883.

Hill. Smith planted a corn crop, and everyone thought he was wasting his time and energy, but that crop and subsequent crops turned out very good.¹⁰ Prior to that time, all of the black land portion was in "straight mesquite grass, and stock raising was the only industry for which it was used."¹¹ Following a severe drouth which killed practically all of the mesquite grass, much of the black land was grubbed and placed in cultivation.

In 1892 the Limestone County Fair Association was incorporated with J. W. Stuart as president, D. Oliver as treasurer, G. H. Parker as secretary, Sol Nussbaum as vice-president, and J. W. Stuart, G. H. Parker, T. C. Livingston, L. C. Estes, J. E. Oliver, and N. J. Alford as trustees. December 7 was a red-letter day in the history of the county because Groesbeck put up \$5,000 in good hard cash to show the world what the county was capable of doing. C. W. Cobb, owner of the *New Era*, reported: "Groesbeck took a contract to have a fair, Limestone County took a notion to help her out, neighboring counties sent fine horses to help her out and the fair became on this day possible and a fact."¹² W. A. Kincaid praised the farmer, saying he should never be forgotten for "his grand place in the upbuilding and main-tainance of the Republic."¹³

The fair was centered around horse-racing. From the records of the fair the following is found:

The first race on the list was a running race, quarter mile dash. Out of nine entries there were five starters, and it was a good race from start to finish. The horses had an excellent start and well bunched, but Yellow, entered by John Walling, dropped out at about 175 yards and Brown Dick, M. T. Bay Dick and Rebel came thundering down the track, their great strides seeming almost continuous leaps in the air, as in less than 26 seconds the leader's nose passed under the wire, close crowded by the second, well pressed by the third and scarce two lengths ahead of the gallant old sorrel Rebel. The horses running were Bay Dick first, M. T. second, Brown Dick third, Rebel fourth and Yellow distanced. Time 2.5 $\frac{1}{4}$.

Entries for December 8 included:

First Race—Running Mile Dash

Name	Entered By	Residence	Owner
Lizzie B.	C. M. McCullough		
Joe Hardy	C. P. Briggs	Calvert	C. S. Weredit

¹⁰Limestone County Deeds, R. 294.

¹¹Letter from W. E. Whitcomb, March 12, 1951.

¹²*Limestone New Era*, December 8, 1892.

¹³"Minutes of Limestone County Fair Association for December 7," MSS. Privately owned.

Second Race—Running Three-Eighths Dash

Name	Entered By	Residence	Owner
Lilly Baltie	C. P. Briggs	Calvert	C. P. Briggs
Stella M	C. P. Briggs	Calvert	C. Moore
Electra	Watson Bros.	Fairfield	Watson
Orphie B.	N. J. Erskine	Kosse	C. W. Brown
Roy	H. H. Hobbs	Kosse	H. H. Hobbs

Third Race—Half Mile Dash

Winnie W.	F. M. Fisher	Waldo	
Myrtle	W. J. Erskine	Kosse	W. J. Erskine
Tucker	E. Hawkins		E. Hawkins
Joe Hardy	C. P. Briggs	Calvert	
Seguin	J. J. Jackson	Waco	J. W. Baker
Willie C.	T. T. Hooper	Calvert	

Fourth Race

R O	E. R. Herring	Prairie Hill	E. R. Herring
Yellow Jacket	Hightower	Kosse	Hightower
Dexter	G. W. Reese	Groesbeck	G. W. Reese
Rough & R'dy	L. C. Estes	Groesbeck	Estes & Bennett

Fifth Race—Pacing Mile Heats

Bill	H. J. Shillings	Groesbeck	N. Tucker
Tede Alford	Smith	Corsicana	N. Alford
Bay Tom	L. Allen	Kosse	¹⁴

The editor of the *New Era* summarized the fair by saying: "... this county has advanced many years in material prosperity in the past few years. In place of the cow pony, we have the thoroughbred; instead of \$50 cow ponies, there are horses of improved breed and worth hundreds. Where the longhorn used to parade his wild beauty, now quietly graze the Jersey and Holstein. The razorback has given way to the Berkshire; and fine fowls are here to stay. Duly one thing remains as of old, her open hearted and generous minded people remain unchanged in their old habits of hospitable generosity."¹⁵

Superintendents of the various divisions included W. B. Baker and T. K. Stroud of the cattle department; W. P. Brown Jr., and R. Oliver of the mules, horses, and jacks; J. B. Jordan of sheep, hogs, and goats; J. F. Taylor of poultry; and Calvin Anglin of farm and garden. Premiums were awarded as follows:

Count D'Orme owned by the Tehuacana Coach Horse Company took the blue ribbon, and Brown George, owned by R. F. George of Hornhill, took the red ribbon as best stallions on the ground.

Highlander owned by Ritter took the blue ribbon as best stallion for general purposes, aged two years and under three.

Dash owned by William Justice of Personville took the blue ribbon as best colt for all purposes.

¹⁴*Limestone New Era*, December 8, 1892.

¹⁵*Limestone New Era*, December 10, 1892.

Kate J. owned by B. W. Jones of Armour received the blue ribbon, and Maud S. owned by B. W. Fowler of Mexia took red ribbon as best mares for all purposes aged four years and over.

Maud S. and Black Alice took blue and red ribbons respectively for being best all purposes mares aged two and under three. Both belonged to J. Q. Hightower of Kosse.

Minnie Oliver received blue ribbon and Ida Oliver the red ribbon as best mare colts for all purposes.

Jack Ranger owned by J. G. Walling of Pleasant Grove received blue ribbons, and Tom Bush owned by Levingston and Brown the red ribbon as best jacks four years old and over.

Brigham Young belonging to T. L. Stewart took the blue ribbon as best jack between the ages of two and three years.

Rhoda belonging to Frank Jackson, and Jack owned by D. W. Burchfield received the blue and red ribbons respectively for being the best mules one year old and under two.

Ranger owned by J. M. Hart, and Tom belonging to S. A. Goolsby received the blue and red ribbons respectively for being the best mule colts.

Jack Ranger owned by J. G. Walling of Pleasant Grove received the blue ribbon as best jack with four or more of his colts on the ground.

George owned by J. M. Suttle took the blue ribbon as best colt, draft grade.

Rexes of Mercer, a cow belonging to W. B. Rawls of Groesbeck received the blue ribbon. He also owns the following cattle which were awarded premiums: Rexes of Texas, a heifer; Corrie Neeley, one-year-old heifer; Noble Boy's Baby, a cow; a male calf eight months old. All of the stock is Jersey.

Nannie Graves, a three-year-old cow, and Orphan Lad, a bull, both received blue ribbons. Both belong to W. A. Hinchliffe.

The blue ribbon for best Berkshire pigs was awarded to J. W. Stuart and his Holstein cows and one-year-old Holstein bull also received blue ribbon.

One pair geese and one pair Buff Cochin chicks belonging to J. T. Stewart, first premium.

Other first premiums were awarded to:

One pair light Brahmans, one pair silver Wyandottes, and chicks of same, one pair white Plymouth Rock chicks and one pair white S. C. Leghorns belonging to J. F. Taylor.

One pair Lanshans of E. R. Herring's.

One pair geese and one pair Java chicks belonging to G. D. Wait.

One pair pit games belonging to L. L. Reese.

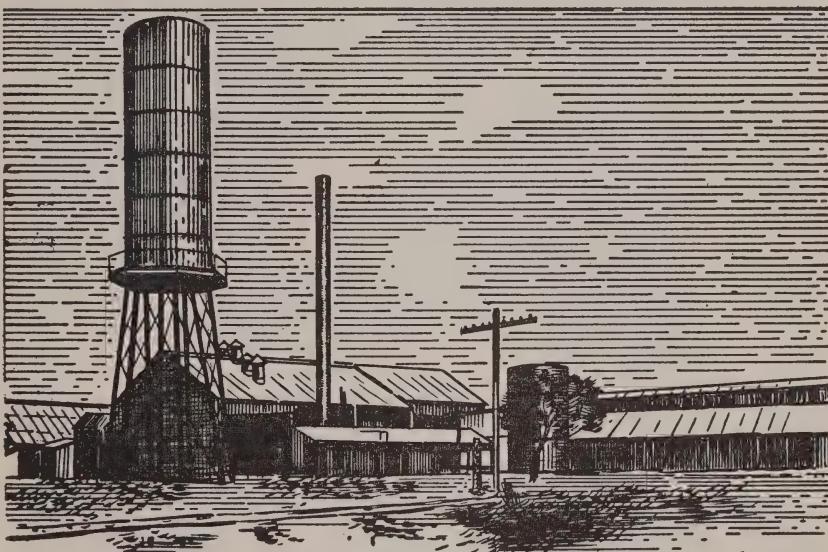
One pair S. C. brown Leghorns belonging to F. F. Gerding.

One pair partridge Cochin and chicks of same; one pair bronze turkeys and chicks of same belonging to W. A. Hinchliffe.

One pair black Minorca chick belonging to J. M. P. Morrow.¹⁶ Perhaps other awards or honors were distributed but no records of them have been located.

Two special exhibits at the fair included the Todd cotton-picking machine and a steam food cooker exhibited by L. McKinnon of Prairie Grove but supplied by Adam Brothers of Mexia. The remarkable feat of the cooker was that it took only fifteen minutes to prepare food.

Opening of small black land farms brought the county to the forefront as one of the leading cotton producing regions in the state. From 9,037 bales produced in 1879, the decade of the eighties saw a huge increase so that in 1889 the county reported 27,274 bales of cotton raised on 64,868 acres.¹⁷ One of the peak years was 1912 when 88,900 bales of cotton were raised. Restraints forced people to abandon the farms which, in turn, reduced the amount of cotton raised. In 1953, only 31,245 bales were ginned in the county, and there are indications that the production of cotton is slowly giving away to stock raising.



MUNGER GIN AT MEXIA

Opening of this new cotton land forced the erection of new gins. Earlier, W. A. Watson had built a gin at Ferguson Prairie, R. W. Turner owned a gin near Kosse, H. M. Munger gin at Mexia, and Anglin gin at Groesbeck. In 1873 J. W. Gunter built a gin near Kosse and

¹⁶The writer is deeply indebted to Mrs. S. D. Bugg for a list of the winners of this first fair.

¹⁷*Memorial History*, 307.

Attention, Cotton Growers!

Agents Wanted in Every Cotton
County in Cotton States!

Live Agents Will Make Good
Money!



Barrow's Cotton Receiver Attachment

will enable the picker to gather 50 to 100 lbs. more per day. No time lost changing cotton from one hand to the other. No dropped locks. No time lost from picking. The Receiver stands ready. Can be attached to any sack in 15 minutes, made for either side. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Sample outfits at cost \$1.50.

ADDRESS, AT ONCE,

**J. G. BARROW & CO., Manufacturers,
MEXIA, TEXAS.**

AGRICULTURAL ADVERTISEMENT

Solomon Ruyle built one near Mount Calm. J. A. Harrington sold his mill, ginstands, engines, boiler, press, and scales to W. I. Williams for \$2,500. R. E. Farrow sold his gin to C. S. Welch for \$300. But, indications point to the first gin in the county being owned by one Robert Foy.

Following the black land cotton, gins were erected near Delia by H. W. Walton, near Billington by J. J. Strickland, at Horn Hill by Tom Harris, and Joseph Nussbaum erected gins near his property. It has been estimated that between forty and fifty gins were located in the county at one time.

W. F. Proctor was the first man to be appointed demonstration agent in Agriculture in the United States. A life-long friend of Dr. Seaman Knapp who originated that work, Proctor received his appointment in 1903 when the government first entered that field. Later, when the office of state agent in charge of this work was created, he was appointed to that position.¹⁸ Proctor shipped the first carload of watermelons from Limestone County in 1898, and is reported to have owned a broom factory at Kosse in the early days.

Several firsts may be attributed to several individuals in the county. J. W. Gunter shipped the first car of cotton seed ever shipped from Kosse. His son, Macon Gunter shipped two cars of wheat in 1918. Micajah Crenshaw invented and patented a steel plow while a resident of Springfield. J. W. Pearson invented a device for drawing "coal oil" from the lamp. John Barrows invented a cotton receiver attachment. Thus, goes the list.

The Grange was most active in the county, as illustrated below:

Club	Location	Secretary
Tehuacana	Tehuacana	James Atkinson
Prairie Grove	Prairie Grove	C. T. Harris
Johnson	Personville	W. D. Lamring
Oak Grove	Mount Calm	Thomas Ruyle
Industry	Kosse	S. L. Glassford
Frost's Creek	Groesbeck	T. H. Dennis

But aside from agriculture, some attention was given to the development of the vast potter's clay found in the county. In the early eighties, Surgi and d'Estrampes assayed the clay discovered near Kosse and pronounced it kaolin of the finest quality, fully equal to that used in the celebrated factory at Sevres. The New Orleans *Democrat* reported:

Kaolin, the clay used in making porcelain is very rare everywhere, but rather more common in this country than in Europe. Notwithstanding this fact, the United States is very backward in this branch of manufacture, and nothing but the

¹⁸W. Frank Proctor was born in 1857. He died on January 17, 1916, at College Station and was buried at Kosse.

roughest kinds of chinaware, earthenware and stoneware are made here. The recently established New Orleans factory is one of the first in this country proposing to make first class goods.

That found on the farm (near Kosse) is of an excellent character and suitable to the manufacture of the finest kind of goods. This deposit was discovered a year ago, and believed then to be of great value, but it was impossible to discover its worth, or to find any market for it. The establishment of the porcelain factory here attracted attention to it, and a further investigation was made, with satisfactory results. The supply is . . . inexhaustable.¹⁹

A few pieces of porcelain were made but the deposit was never developed. Much earlier, Alberry Johnson established a pottery shop in the Pottersville area. Later, John Fowler operated it until his death in 1912.

People were attracted to the area by the eloquent words of several writers, among them being Amos A. Jayne who advertised rather uniquely:

LAND! LAND!! LAND!!!

60,000 Acres

The Lone Star is waving—the flag of the free,
Then strike for Texas, if men you would be;
No idlers are wanted—the thrifty and wise,
To wealth and high station can equally rise;
We've corn, oats and cotton—the richest of loam,
Which yields to the settler provisions at home;
Here pecan, hickory and walnut are waving to the breeze,
Bringing nuts to your table—hogs, too, if you please.
Trees of every description arise on each hand,
From alluvial soils to the rich table land;
Here springs are exhaustless and streams never dry
In the seasons from winter to autumn's bright sky.
A wide panorama of prairie can be seen
With grapes of all kinds, perennially green.
Here millions of cattle, sheep, horses and goats,
Grow fat as if stall fed, or pastured on oats.
No poverty is known in our might domain
To the man who exerts either fingers or brain,
Here are homes for the millions, the rich and the poor,
While Texas opens wide her hospitable door.

¹⁹New Orleans *Democrat*, March, 1880.

I have hundreds of acres, yea thousands to sell.
Yet can point, without cast, to where pre-emptors can dwell,
My terms will be liberal with those whom I deal,
While security all in their titles can feel.
Buy land while it is cheap, and the finest select,
'Twill, young men, prove a fortune when least you expect;
Old men, for your children, buy and file it away,
A God send it will prove on some rainy day.
Write letters to Groesbeck, to Amos A. Jayne,
And you'll find that your labor has not been in vain.²⁰

Only time and further study will complete the many unwritten
chapters on Limestone County's agricultural history.

²⁰Poem by Amos A. Jayne in Limestone County Collection.

APPENDIX

TAX ROLL OF LIMESTONE COUNTY, TEXAS, 1846-1847

William H. Alsobrook	Emanuel Clement	J. M. Hammon
A. Anderson	Pinkney Cobb	John Hane
Hugh Anderson	Columbus T. C. Cook	Joseph B. Hardin
Abram Anglin	James B. Cook	Robert E. Hardin
Elisha Anglin	J. H. Cook	Thomas Harville
John Anglin	Mary Cooke	David Hasseltine
Moses Anglin	Wilds K. Cooke	George W. Head
Orpha Anglin	John Corbett	James A. Head
William Anglin	John Covington	Allen Hill
John Arnett	George W. Cox	J. L. Hill
John Baker	Thomas Cravens	Edward T. Jackson
Walter E. Baker	Josiah Culp	William H. James
David Barclay	Gideon Curry	William C. Jones
A. Barton	Thomas Curry	John Jordan
David Barton, Jr.	William Daniel	W. King
David Barton, Sr.	Brinkley Davis	Thomas Kirkwood
John Barton	E. B. Davis	William Kolb
Robert Barton	Eli Davis	Arthur Kuykendall
Samuel Barton	James M. Davis	J. S. Lawrence
Frank Barziza	Lewis Dickens	John Lawrence
Micajah Bateman	William H. Dickson	Ruffian Lawson
Seth H. Bates	Thomas Dillard	Arthur Lott
Silas H. Bates	Howell B. Dowdy	Celia Lott
Charles Beasley	Abelan Downs	Jesse Lott
William J. Biggs	Sarah Durett	John Lott
S. A. Blain	S. M. Durrett	Ervin Magee
William J. Bludworth	David Eaton	Levi Manning
William Bolton	Richard Eaton, Jr.	William N. P. Marlin
John Boyd	Richard Eaton, Sr.	James Marlin
W. Boyles	Silas Eaton	John Martin
J. Bruton	Benjamin Edwards	E. W. Matthews
C. W. Buckley	A. Elkins	Jefferson Matthews
David Burns	Robert C. Epps	R. V. Matthews
William Burns	John T. Faulkenberry	Green McDonald
Henry Campbell	Nancy Faulkenberry	Daniel McGrew
Francis Capps	Joseph Ferguson	John McGuffin
Harvey Capps	Robert Follett	Roland McKinney
James Quinn Capps	Robert Foot	James B. McLean
B. M. Carr	Elijah Franklin	Richard McLindsey(?)
James M. Cartwright	G. W. Franklin	Forest Menefee
Michael D. Castleman	John Franklin	Thomas Menefee
James S. Chambers	George Gentry	William Menefee
Thomas J. Chambers	J. W. George	Lucretia Miller
John Clapp	Albert G. Gholson	Meredith Miller
John Claypool	Jackson Griffin	Robert Miller
Stephen J. Claypool	J. B. Guyton	Doctor Moore

James W. Moore	Thomas A. Polk	James Springfield
J. H. Moore	Daniel Potter	Alfonso Steele
Richard Moore	Elijah Powers, Jr.	W. Stewart
Barba Morgan	Elijah Powers, Sr.	Ethan Stroud
G. W. Morgan	Francis Powers	Logan Stroud
Joseph Morgan	L. B. Powers	Mandred Stroud
William J. Morgan	William C. Powers	Memory Stroud
James B. Morris	Willis A. Price	Bob Thomas
Shadrack Morris	Jackson Puckett	William Townsend
James L. Moss	Elijah Reed	DeWitt C. Vary
James Nelson	F. M. Ridgeway	Daniel D. Vaughan
Samuel Nelson	Sarah Ridgeway	Gideon Walker
Isaac Nix	W. W. Roberts	Sanders Walker
Charles Oak	Riley H. Roland	Thomas Walker
John E. Oliver	David B. Scarbrough	John Ward
Augustin Owen	E. Scott	Charles Welch
Clinton C. Owen	David Seeley	William Welch
Mary Owen	Hugh Sheppard	Charles Wells
H. E. Pearce	J. R. Shannon	Moses Wells
Bradley Phifer	James Simmons	Pleasant Whitaker
Forest Phifer	Jeremiah Simpson	Josephus Williams
H. B. Philpott	Charles Smith	Samuel Wilson
John Philpott	Elizabeth Smith	David Winkler
L. C. Pleasants	Green L. Smith	Tilman Wolverton
Luther T. M. Plummer	Levi Sparks	Stephen Wood

LIST OF KNOWN TOWNS, VILLAGES, AND COMMUNITIES

Allen	Coesville	Eureka
Alon	Comanche	Eutaw
Andrews Chapel	Coit	Fairview
Armour	Concord	Fallon
Bald Hill	Condor	Farrar
Barnett Prairie	Coolidge	Felix
Bear Grass	Cottonwood	Forest Chapel
Bellevue	Cowser	Forest Glade
Ben Hur	Criswell	Fort Parker
Bethel	Cross Roads	Frosa
Beulah	Dale	Frost Creek
Big Hill	Datura	Gordon
Billington	Davis Chapel	Groesbeck
Blackjack Ridge	Davis Prairie	Hancock
Bounds	Delia	Hardy Chapel
Bowman Grove	Dooley	Harmony
Box Church	Doyle	Harmony Grove
Boyd	Duncan	Harmony Ridge
Callina	East Point	Harper's Prairie
Cedar	Echols	Heads Creek
Cedar Creek	Egypt	Heads Prairie
Center	Eldorado	Headsville
Center Point	Elm Creek	Hickory Grove
Central Institute	Elm Grove	High Prairie
Ceyola	Elm Ridge	Horn Hill
Coal	English Colony	Humphreys

Independence	Mustang	Shady
Iron Clad	New Home	Shady Grove
Island	New Hope	Shead
Kirk	North Rockey	Shiloh
Kosse	Nus	Sim's Colony
LaSalle	Oak Hill	Smith Chapel
Lavender	Oakes	South Bend
Lewisville	Odds	Springfield
Little	Oklahoma	Storrs
Little Brazos	Old Union	Sulphur Springs
Little Elm	Oliver	Tehuacana
Locust Grove	Personville	Tehuacana Valley
Lone Oak	Pleasant Grove	Thelma
Long Branch	Pleasant Hill	Thornton
Lost Prairie	Pleasant Valley	Tidwell
McBay Prairie	Point Enterprise	Tiger Prairie
McDaniel	Post Oak Grove	Tucker's Mill
Macedonia	Pottershop	Union
Marx Chapel	Prairie Chapel	Union Church
Mesquite	Prairie Grove	Valley
Mexia	Prairie Hill	Varela
Midway	Prairie Point	Victoria
Mill Creek	Prairie View	Watt
Moss Springs	Roberta	Welcome
Mount Antioch	Rocky Crossing	Whitcomb
Mount Davis	Rocky Point	Willow
Mount Joy	Roda	Willow Springs
Mount Vernon	Sandy Branch	Wolf Creek
Mount Zion	Sandy Creek	Woodland
Munger	Science Hall	Yarbroville

LIST OF COUNTY OFFICIALS*

*Records may be incomplete. An attempt to secure all data revealed that so many changes took place in the 1860's and 1870's, people forgot to report them.

COUNTY JUDGES

George W. Cox, 1846-1848	L. B. Cobb, 1884-1890
D. M. Prendergast, 1848-1850	W. G. Rucker, 1890-1894
J. D. McCutcheon, 1850-1851	E. C. Chambers, 1894-1896
L. B. Prendergast, 1851-1856	A. J. Harper, 1896-1902
Ambrose G. Wood, 1856-1858	James Kimbell, 1902-1908
Reuben E. Sanders, 1858-1860	Walter A. Keeling, 1908-1912
James L. Burney, 1860-1862	A. M. Blackmon, 1912-1915
Jesse Ellis, 1862-1865	J. E. Bradley, 1915-1920
Clem R. Waters, 1865-1866	H. F. Kirby, 1920-1928
James L. Burney, 1866-1867	Johnson Wakefield, 1928-1932
A. G. Moore, 1867-1871	Cannon Barron, 1932-1934
A. F. Garner, 1871 (1 month) (Justices of the Peace Presided, 1871-1876)	Lewis M. Seay, 1934-1938
John A. Harrington, 1876-1880	Carl Cannon, 1938-1942
R. M. Fancher, 1880-1884	Henry Jackson, 1942-1946
	Clarence Ferguson, 1946-1952
	Norton Fox, 1952-1959

SHERIFFS

Samuel Clement, 1846-1848
James B. McLean, 1848-1850
James W. Bennett, 1850-1851
George Watts Walker, 1851-1852
Ward Kooler, 1852-
Milton A. Tucker, 1852-1853
Hiram M. Roberts, 1853-1856
Darling F. Davis, 1856-1857
Marshall C. Jones, 1857-1858
E. Y. Scruggs, 1858-1860
Anthony F. Sharp, 1860-1862
Allen Lasswell, 1862-1865
James J. Lewis, 1865
Milton A. Tucker, 1865-1869
Peyton Parker, 1869-1871
Smith P. Young, 1871
S. M. Jones, 1871-1872
Peyton Parker, 1872-1876
John W. Love, 1876-1878
J. B. Tyus, 1878-1879
T. E. Jackson, 1879-1884
Robert M. Love, 1884-1892
J. B. Gresham, 1892-1902
J. E. Gresham, 1902-1906
John T. Prichard, 1906-1910
Abe F. Therrell, 1910-1914
Price Harris, 1914-1918
W. S. Loper, 1918-1922
Whit Popejoy, 1922-1926
A. B. McKenzie, 1926-1932
Will Adams, 1932-1936
Luther Simmons, 1936-1940
Sam Adkins, 1940-1944
Charlie Shreve, 1944-1948
Bill Green, 1948-1952
Harry Dunlap, 1952-1955
Jack Bothwell, 1955-1959

COUNTY CLERKS

Clinton C. Owen, 1846-1848
William Archibald, 1848-1850
R. R. Smith, 1850-1852
George W. Johnson, 1852-1858
James M. Davis, 1858-1865
George W. Johnson, 1865-1866
S. D. Walker, 1866-1867
A. H. Smith, 1867-
J. B. Vallandingham, 1867-1871
M. B. Bonner, 1871-1872
J. B. Vallandingham, 1872-1874
S. D. Walker, 1874-1882
W. P. Brown, 1882-1892
J. G. Guynes, 1892-1894
W. L. Bond, 1894-1900
J. A. Wright, 1900-1902
Alf Mills, 1902-1906
W. C. Frazier, 1906-1910
Sam A. Thomas, 1910-1914
Arch C. Thompson, 1914-1918
Porter P. Brown, 1918-1922
J. L. Day, 1922-1926
Lee Allen, 1926-1930
Anna Burney, 1930-1934
Will Bond, 1934-1938
Steve Unfried, 1938-1942
John Kidd, 1942-1959

TAX ASSESSORS

W. P. Love, 1876-1878
S. K. Scruggs, 1878-1880
John Lloyd, 1880-1882
F. M. Sellers, 1882-1890
W. M. Johnson, 1890-1894
John T. Smith, 1894-1898
J. C. McDonald, 1898-1900
W. R. Faught, 1900-1904
Tom L. Cox, 1906-1908
F. M. Sellers, 1908-1916
Tom M. Cain, 1916-1920
A. B. Bunn, 1920-1924
R. W. Steen, 1924-1928
W. A. Robbins, 1928-1930
Pink Bates, 1930-1934

TAX COLLECTORS

John W. Love, 1876-1878
J. B. Tyus, 1878-1879
J. W. Stephens, 1880-1882
W. H. Richardson, 1882-1884
J. A. Shriver, 1884-1886
R. W. Priest, 1886-1888
S. D. Walker, 1888-1892
J. P. Brown, 1892-1896
J. I. Moody, 1896-1900
C. S. Cookerly, 1900-1906

Noble Groves, 1906-1910
George W. Herod, 1910-1914
L. B. Richardson, 1914-1918
Melvin S. Thetford, 1918-1922

W. A. Robbins, 1922-1926
A. B. Bunn, 1926-1930
Senate Womack, 1930-1934

TAX ASSESSORS AND COLLECTORS

George W. Cox, 1848-1850
Joseph R. Brown, 1850-1851
Milton A. Tucker, 1851-1852
Peyton Parker, 1852-1856
Andrew Wilburn, 1856-1858
William M. Seawright, 1859-1862
Darling F. Davis, 1862-1865
Peyton Parker, 1865-1867

Madison S. Yoakum, 1867-1869
Hampton Steele, 1869-1870
J. H. Lofland, 1870-1874
Pat Tucker, 1934-1938
Wilcie Browder, 1938-1942
E. K. Seale, 1942-1946
Henry Jackson, 1946-1950
A. B. Sims, 1950-1959

COUNTY TREASURERS

Moses Anglin, 1850-1853
William A. Brown, 1853-1854
S. K. Scruggs, 1854-1860
Miles Fuller, 1860-1862
R. W. Swaim, 1862-1864
Peyton Parker, 1864-1865
Pleasant Smith, 1865-1866
D. F. Davis, 1866
W. A. Brown, 1866
B. Simon, 1868-1870
A. F. Garner, 1871
James Huston, 1871-1872
Clem R. Waters, 1872-1874
J. B. Tyus, 1874-1876
W. P. Brown, 1876-1882

Joshua Wood, 1882-1888
O. Wiley, 1888-1894
George Collom, 1894-1900
A. C. Odom, 1900-1904
J. D. Therrell, 1904-1908
Solon Rasco, 1908-1914
J. O. Applegate, 1914-1918
Bessie Wilson Campbell, 1918-1920
Lula Oates, 1920-1924
H. C. Fitzgerald, 1924-1930
J. M. Lockhart, 1930-1936
Mrs. R. W. Steen, 1936-1940
Sid McCoslin, 1940-1944
Wes Coker, 1944-1950
Pony Webb, 1950-1959

COUNTY ATTORNEYS

B. F. Lynn, 1867-1869(?)
Clem R. Waters, 1869
(No Record), 1870-1876
R. M. Fancher, 1876-1878
James Kimbell, 1878-1884
F. P. Smith, 1884-1886
William Kennedy, 1886-1888
Osborne Kennedy, 1888-1894
Marrero Herring, 1894-1898
Walter A. Keeling, 1898-1902
V. B. Hayes, 1902-1904
William Kennedy, 1904-1908
J. E. Bradley, 1908-1914

Marrero Herring, 1914-1916
Lon E. Eubanks, 1916-1918
Lester W. Shepperd, 1918-1920
Lon E. Eubanks, 1920-1922
Scott Reed, 1922-1926
Carl Cannon, 1926-1930
Henry Jackson, 1930-1934
Roy Lewis, 1934-1938
L. L. Geren, 1938-1944
Norton Fox, 1944-1950
Joe Schultz, 1950-1954
L. M. Seay, 1954-1956
Owen F. Watkins, 1956-1959

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

John T. Cox, 1906-1912
James R. Atkins, 1912-1916
T. L. Prichard, 1916-1920
Cora Cayton Ferguson, 1920-1928
J. J. Barfield, 1928-1934
J. J. Bates, 1934-1938

L. L. Bennett, 1938-1942
Onys T. Curlee, 1942-1946
Charles H. Laurence, 1946-1954
Eugene E. Sims, 1954-1958
Charles H. Laurence, 1958-1959

COUNTY SURVEYORS

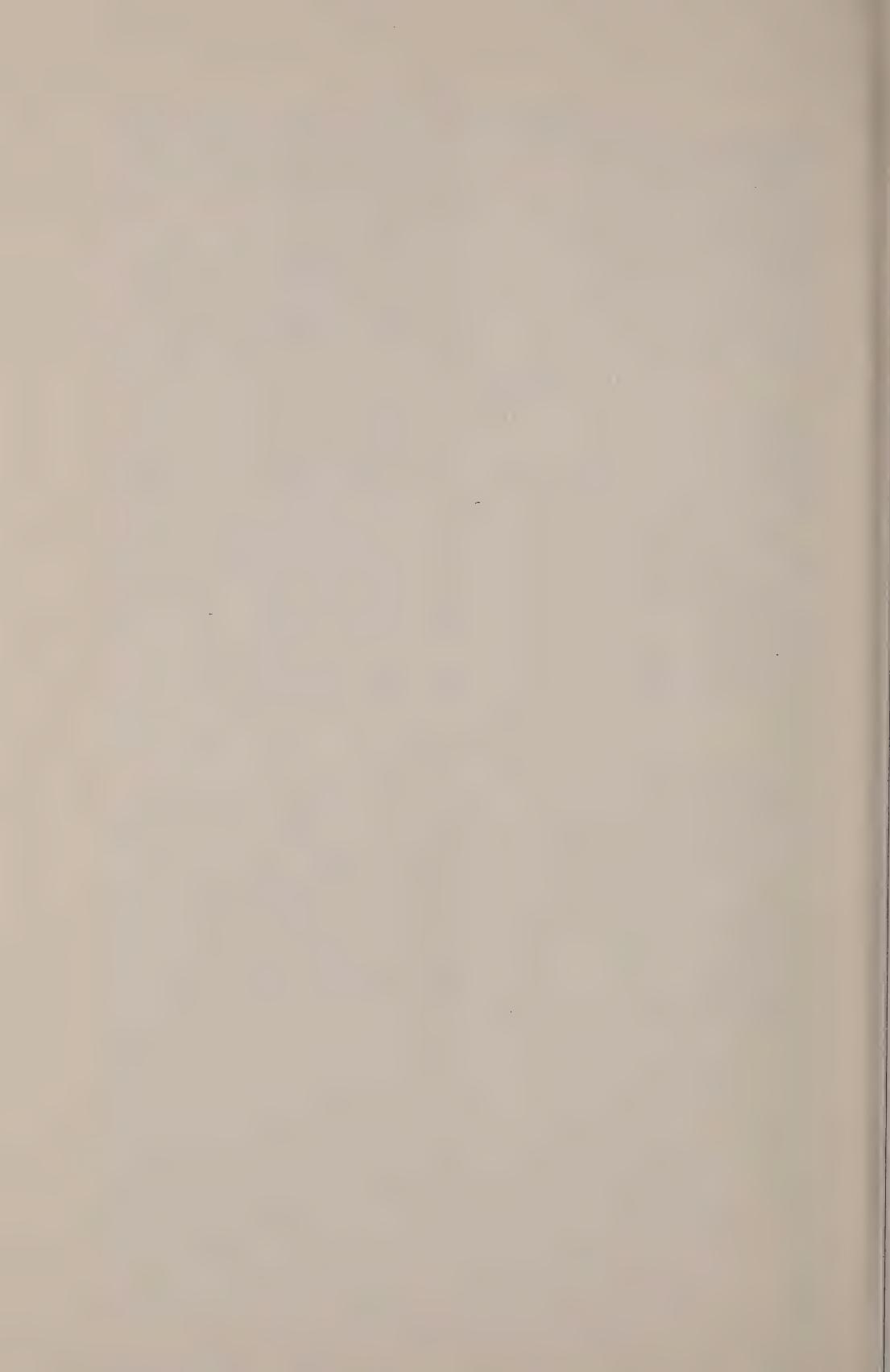
Samuel G. McLendon, 1858-1862	H. W. Williams, 1886-1888
H. M. Roberts, 1862-1866	T. R. Todd, 1888-1890
Thomas J. Oliver, 1866-1869	I. N. Roark, 1890-1896
David Johnson, 1869-1870	O. F. Davis, 1896-1898
J. M. Stringfield, 1870-1871	A. A. Allison, 1898-1902
H. M. Roberts, 1871-1876	J. H. Roark, 1902-1907
A. K. Jackson, 1876-1878	A. A. Hyden, 1907-1922
H. L. Graves, 1878-1880	A. P. Smythe, 1922-1924
Samuel G. McLendon, 1880-1882	A. A. Hyden, 1924-1942
R. W. Priest, 1882-1884	(No Record), 1942-1946
H. M. Roberts, 1884-1886	Walter W. Leach, 1946-1959

DISTRICT CLERKS

John H. Arnett, 1846-1850	W. L. Carley, 1900-1904
John Shaw, 1850-1852	W. T. Stockton, 1904-1908
Jefferson T. Love, 1852-1854	Lon E. Eubanks, 1908-1912
Hinton C. Smith, 1854-1865	S. M. Garrett, 1912-1916
J. B. Vallandingham, 1865-1866	Claude Basden, 1916-1920
Hinton C. Smith, 1866-1868	Johnson Wakefield, 1920-1924
J. B. Vallandingham, 1868-1871	M. A. Ainsworth, 1924-1928
W. B. Bonner, 1871-1872	Laura Perkins McElroy, 1928-1932
J. B. Vallandingham, 1872-1874	H. C. Fitzgerald, 1932-1938
S. D. Walker, 1874-1876	Ruby Lawley, 1938-1940
M. T. Johnson, 1876-1882	Leona McKenzie Barefield, 1940-1944
W. T. Jackson, 1882-1886	A. B. Sims, 1944-1950
J. W. Stephens, 1886-1892	Jeanie Pitts (Brown), 1950-1954
A. J. Harper, 1892-1896	Patsy Taylor (Belk), 1954-1957
W. W. Wright, 1896-1900	C. O. Budde, 1957-1959

DISTRICT JUDGES

R. E. B. Baylor, 1846-1853	Sam R. Frost, 1886-1888
Henry J. Jewett, 1853-1857	Rufus Hardy, 1888-1896
John Gregg, 1857-1861	L. B. Cobb, 1896-1908
Robert S. Gould, 1861-1862	H. B. Davis, 1908-1915
James C. Walker, 1862-1865	A. M. Blackmon, 1915-1925 (77th)
G. A. Everett, 1865-1866	J. Ross Bell, 1924-1928 (87th)
A. G. Perry, 1866-1867	W. T. Jackson, 1925-1928 (77th)
Nat Hart Davis, 1867-1868(?)	Fountain Kirby, 1928-1952 (77th)
F. P. Wood, 1868-1870(?)	W. R. Boyd, 1928-1932 (87th)
J. W. Oliver, 1870-1873	Lex Smith, 1932-1948 (87th)
J. H. Banton, 1873-1874	R. W. Williford, 1948-1959 (87th)
D. M. Prendergast, 1874-1882	Clarence Ferguson, 1952-1959 (77th)
L. D. Bradley, 1882-1886	



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